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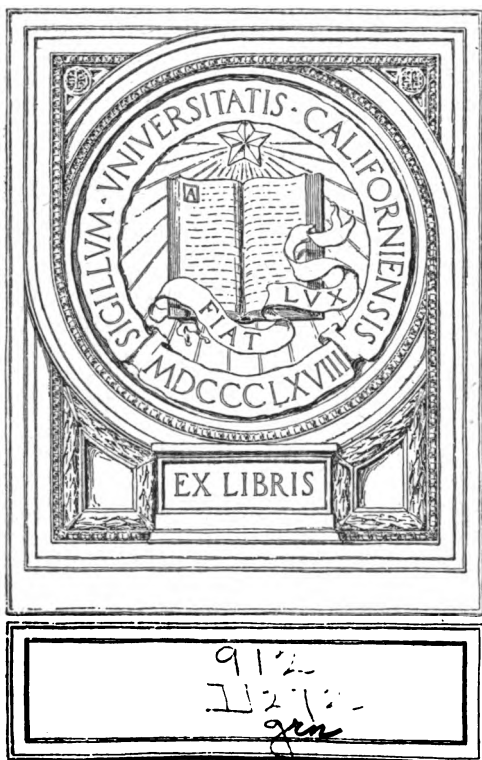
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By W. J. and C. W. DAWSON

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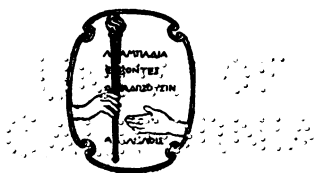
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# THE GREAT ENGLISH NOVELISTS

WITH INTRODUCTORY  
ESSAYS AND NOTES

BY  
WILLIAM J. DAWSON  
AND  
CONINGSBY W. DAWSON

VOL. I



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TO VINU  
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#### **NOTE**

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I

**The Growth and Technique of the  
English Novel**



## The Growth and Technique of the English Novel

**T**HE history of the English novel has its roots in realism, and the first great master of realism in English prose-fiction was Daniel Defoe (1661-1731).

Yet Defoe had had his forerunner in this method, from whom he may well have borrowed his inspiration. A century earlier Robert Greene (1560-1592), breaking away from the artificial school established by Lyly's *Euphues*, had given him his precedent, both as to literary style and subject-matter, in the autobiographical pamphlets which he wrote. These consisted of exposures of contemporary life in London—life, not as the poets would have imagined it, but as it actually was. They are written with the bitterness of first-hand knowledge, dealing with the practices of swindlers and the poverty-inspired shifts of the under-dog. Those penned in his later years, when he had pawned his clothes for bread, are ungarnished self-confessions of his own contrivances to live. Here, in the use made of autobiography and the depiction of contemporary types and manners, the keynotes of *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* were struck. Greene's pamphlets, if written at greater length, would have become the counterparts of Defoe's prose-fictions.

Another and more important of Defoe's great forerunners, whom it is difficult to class, is John Bunyan (1628-1688). What is *The Pilgrim's Progress*? In its method it is more



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than an allegory; structurally it is less than a novel. Yet certain critics have found in it sufficient of structure to proclaim it as the earliest of English novels. One thing is certain, it is realism; for as Robert Louis Stevenson has said, realism is not so much a question of subject-matter as of method. The romanticist concentrates attention upon men's idealized and improbable selves; the realist upon their immediate circumstances and possibilities, good and bad, as they actually are.

"As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream."

Once the romance contained in this opening sentence of *The Pilgrim's Progress* has been conceded, all that follows becomes reality.

Whether Defoe was aware of the work of Robert Greene is not known; but that he, a dissenter, and professional moralist, should have remained uninfluenced by John Bunyan seems impossible. The religious pretexts on which certain scandalous tales are introduced by Bunyan into *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* are very similar to those made use of by Defoe as excuses for the narration of the more unsavory details in the careers of his rogues and termagants. There is good ground to suppose that the hack-journalist learned his great lesson in the value of realism, as applied to prose-fiction, from a careful study of the writings of the inspired tinker.

This revolt against romanticism, which was begun by Robert Greene and had smouldered sullenly under all the artificialities of the seventeenth century, found dominant expression in 1719 when *Robinson Crusoe* appeared. *Robinson Crusoe* is written *actually*; every care is taken to deceive the public into the belief that it is a veritable autobiog-

raphy. Defoe, writing a preface to his own invention in the character of editor, says: "If ever the story of any private man's adventures in the world were worth making public, and were acceptable to be published, the editor of this account thinks this will be so. The story is told with modesty, with seriousness, and with a religious application of events to the uses to which wise men always apply them—*viz.*, to the instruction of others, by this example, and to justify and honor the wisdom of Providence in all the variety of circumstances, let them happen how they will. The editor believes the thing to be a just history of fact; neither is there any appearance of fiction in it."

Thus, in his first attempt at a lengthy prose-fiction, Defoe prepared an elaborate lie to the end that his handiwork might read more like truth to the public. Thoroughness in deception is a characteristic of the realist and, to use Defoe's own words, "Lies are not worth a farthing if they are not calculated for the effectual deceiving of the people they are designed to deceive."

To write true stories, which merely happen not to be true, is the task of the realist. *To lie circumstantially like the truth* has become the guiding principle of the school which Defoe established—the school of realism in which the modern novel found its technique, and out of which it grew.

For the more perfect effecting of this purpose, he cast his fictions in the narrative form of autobiographies and stored them with those petty details, creditable and otherwise, which seem so important to the individual in the reviewing of his own career. There are few subjects which occupy a more prominent place in the personal life than the consideration of finances. To this department of his characters' anxieties Defoe pays particular attention. For instance, in *Moll Flanders* he makes the landlady present

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three lists, containing varying scales of charges for the care of mother and child, one of which Moll is free to choose. The first list totals up to £13 13s.; the second to £25 18s.; the third to £53 14s. All the items which go to make these amounts are fully stated; three months' lodging with diet will cost £6; a minister to christen the child, together with godfathers and clerk, £1 10s.; a supper at the christening, spread for five friends, £1, etc. And again, where Moll robs the little girl of her string of gold beads, we are informed that they were "worth about £12 or £14. I suppose they might have been formerly the mother's, for they were too big for the child's wear." So meticulous is Defoe in his realism that it would be almost possible to reconstruct from his fictions a table of contemporary money values.

The danger of his method of counterfeiting truth is that the process may have no direct bearing on the working out of the story, and may prove tedious to the reader. In Defoe's hands prose-fiction did not develop the plot-interest; therefore in his eyes the copious elaboration of details was justified since it enabled him to lie the more convincingly, which was the goal he had in view.

From the modern standpoint a detail has no value unless it contributes something to the total dénouement of the plot. A novelist proves himself an artist by his ability to discriminate between those incidents and statements which hasten and strengthen, or delay and weaken the crisis. Yet this over-elaboration of detail, to the end that fiction may wear the appearance of truth, is to this day the besetting sin of the realist. Christie Murray has pointed out the inclination to errors of this sort in the novels of George Moore.

"Let me offer a concrete illustration," he says. "In *Esther Waters* Mr. Moore is curiously and meaninglessly

emphatic in his description of a certain room in which the heroine of his action sleeps. Esther, we are told, slipped on her night-dress and got into bed. It was a brass bed without curtains. There were two windows in the room. One of them was flush with the head of the bed, and the other beyond its foot. A chest of drawers stood between them. An observer, unless he had a special purpose in it, would never have dreamed of writing down this bald detail. Nothing comes of the statement of fact. Nothing hangs on the relative position of the bed and the window and the chest of drawers. Nothing happens in the course of the story which justifies the flat and flavorless statement."

Mr. Moore's motive in inserting this "flat and flavorless statement" was doubtless to create the impression of truth—to persuade the reader into the belief that Esther Waters was a real-life character because her historian knew so much about her—even the geography of her bedroom. Of this motive Defoe would have approved, because it assisted the verisimilitude. Since the introduction of *plot* into prose-fiction, however, the critic demands that the worth of every smallest detail narrated shall be judged by its bearing upon the final issue. The introduction of plot into realistic prose-fiction produced the modern novel, and for this Samuel Richardson (1689–1761) must be held responsible.

The modern novel was born by a clumsy accident. Richardson, before he became an author, had gained a private reputation through his facility in the epistolary art. As a little boy he earned his first money by conducting the correspondence of friends less scholarly than himself. It is reported that this correspondence consisted for the most part of love-letters dictated by sentimental girls. Such a training must have given him an early insight into

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the emotional workings of the heart. In 1739, when he had reached the age of fifty, Messrs. Rivington & Osbourne, publishers and friends, invited him to write a book of *Familiar Letters* "on the useful concerns in common life," as a guide for the illiterate. In the process of its composition he bethought him of a story he had heard of the temptations of a servant-maid at the hands of her young master, and of how her virtuous resistance had brought to her honorable marriage instead of ruin. Out of this suggestion grew *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, produced in four volumes in 1740-1741, the first English novel.

Its technical contrivance is awkward in the extreme. The story halts and loiters through an interminable series of letters, which are supposed to pass between Pamela and her correspondents. The initial supposition, that a servant-girl could command such an energy and fitness for epistolary expression, and this in an age when court ladies could hardly spell their names correctly, is absurdly false; it transgresses at the outset the fundamental law of realism, that a lie to be worth the telling must be convincing. And, again, in the mere quantity of correspondence which Richardson's heroes and heroines manage to get through in a single day, his literary device is transparent. Sir Leslie Stephen has remarked this error.

"Richardson's heroines, and his heroes too, for that matter," he says, "would have been portents at any time. Miss Byron, on March 22d, writes a letter of fourteen pages. The same day she follows it up by two of six and twelve pages respectively. On the 23d she leads off with a letter of eighteen pages, and another of ten. On the 24th she gives us two, filling together thirty pages, at the end of which she remarks that she is *forced* to lay down her pen, and then adds a postscript of six more. On the

25th she confines herself to two pages; but after a Sunday's rest she makes another start of equal vigor. In three days, therefore, she covers ninety-six pages . . . a task the magnitude of which may be appreciated by any one who will try the experiment. We should say that she must have written nearly eight hours a day, and are not surprised at her remark that she had on one occasion only managed two hours' sleep."

Yet, notwithstanding the elephantine ponderousness of Richardson's literary device and its falseness, he contrived to take his world by storm. When his second novel, *Clarissa*, was published, ladies spent sleepless nights over the reading of the heroine's tribulations. Mrs. Pilkington has left on record that when Colley Cibber read *Clarissa* "the dear gentleman did almost rave. When I told him that *Clarissa* must die, he said G— d— him if she should, that he should no longer believe in Providence or eternal wisdom or goodness governed the world if merit and innocence and beauty were to be so destroyed." There was even to be found a "minister of the gospel" who thought that had some of *Clarissa's* epistles been discovered in the Bible they would have been regarded as sure proofs of divine inspiration.

All this wild enthusiasm is to be traced to a double cause: first of all to Richardson's introduction of *sentimentalism* into prose-fiction; secondly, to his introduction of *plot*, thus creating out of Defoe's realism a new literary form—namely, the modern novel.

And what is sentimentalism? Sentimentalism is fine feeling not put into practice, but reserved as an emotion to be meditated on; in its basest form it is fine feeling cultivated and made public only for purposes of self-congratulation. The latter was the sentimentalism of Laurence Sterne. The moment a fine emotion is translated

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into action it ceases to be sentimentalism and is converted into sympathy.

The eighteenth century was emphatically an insincere age of high-flown theories and corrupt practices, of tipsy moralists and humanitarian libertines. It awaited the violent dynamic of the French Revolution to compel men's conformity of actions with thoughts. Those tender-hearted ladies who shed copious tears over *Pamela*, the fictitious serving-maid, never troubled their heads over *Pamela's* embodied counterpart who daily endured similar temptations in their own kitchens. But probably their flesh-and-blood *Pamelas* had been christened with less high-sounding names, and certainly they were not possessed of Richardson's epistolary and poignant art.

Sentimentalism was the keynote of the eighteenth century. Of this fact the fussy little London printer was the blundering discoverer, and the discovery gave the modern novel its start. It did more than this: it commenced the feminine movement in fiction. What Coleridge calls "the loaded sensibility, the minute detail, the morbid consciousness of every thought and feeling in the whole flux and reflux of the mind—in short, the self-involution and dream-like continuity of Richardson"—subsequently led in the nineteenth century to the novel of psychology.

The second quality which contributed to Richardson's success—namely, plot-interest—was stumbled on by him by divine accident; the story happened to come to him in the form of a plot, and that was all.

Once having become aware of the advantage of a plot, he and his successors continued to use it. *Pamela* was commenced solely as a moral tract in the hope that it "might possibly turn young people into a course of reading different from the pomp and parade of romance-writing, and, dismissing the improbable and marvellous, with which

fiction generally abounds, might tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue." In another place he states that it was written to warn "young people circumstanced as Pamela was."

Pamela was a girl of poor religious family, who was compelled through straitened circumstances to go out to service. She entered the household of a rich old lady and her son. The old lady died, and the son commenced to tempt the servant-maid. Through thirty-two letters and a lengthy journal she warded off his persuasions and assaults; finally he became more honest, and, impressed by her unshaken virtue, deigned to marry her. The story presents itself naturally in the plot-form. Pamela is so situated that as time goes on her temptation must grow greater; the suspense, or plot-interest, gathers round the question, "At what point will she fall?" The crisis comes when she wins over her aggressor to nobler tactics and he marries her.

Defoe's method of work had been unfavorable to plot-development. He was accustomed to create a leading character called "I"; at one time "I" was Roxana, at another Moll Flanders, at another Robinson Crusoe. Having introduced "I" to his audience, he set out to pen a full-length autobiography, paying no attention to dramatic values, but letting the incidents fall naturally, if sometimes tediously, as in life. A journalist in all things, he viewed the world on the surface, taking account of actions rather than motives, and reported faithfully on what he saw.

Richardson was equally lacking in the sense of drama. With him the half-formed hopes and fears, admissions and retractions, giving way to imaginative passion and sudden uprisings of conscience, all of which precede action, were of vastly more importance than the action itself. For



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such emotional confession the medium of the epistle is best suited.

Then came Henry Fielding (1707-1754), with his immense animal manliness and epic conception of the world. He had commenced life as a writer of burlesques and farces, some of which had a fair share of success. Through this employment he acquired a knowledge of stage-requirements, of the value of concentrated emotional stress, and of the part which scaffolding, or plot, plays in the building up to a compelling situation. Though his novels were written in the spirit of the epic, he adopted the playwright's method. What Richardson did at first by accident, Fielding did by design from the start.

Marion Crawford, in his discussion entitled *The Novel: What it is*, says: "A novel is, after all, a play, and perhaps it is nothing but a substitute for the real play with live characters, scene-shifting and footlights. . . . What is a novel? It is, or ought to be, a pocket-stage. . . . What am I, a novel-writer, trying to do? I am trying, with such limited means as I have at my disposal, to make little pocket-theatres out of words."

Fielding was the first English fiction-writer to appreciate the partial truth of such a statement—that a novel is a visualized and portable play already staged. This implies that the novel tells its story mainly through action; that it relies for its interest upon an unfolding plot, the intensity of which grows with the progress of the story, and that it has a well-defined and emotionally ascending series of scenes and crises. The playwright does not seek to reproduce one person's career in its entirety, as did Defoe. Neither does he attempt to interpret his characters by a minute and subjective analysis of their intimate emotions, as did Richardson. He is content to reveal a small but dramatic portion of a few people's lives, and to make their

actions illustrative of their emotions. In thus dealing with his art objectively Fielding struck a blow, as he intended to, at sentimentalism—sentimentalism which gloats over its fine feelings and avoids the inconvenience of putting them into practice.

His first novel, *Joseph Andrews* (1742), was begun as a satire on *Pamela*. Joseph Andrews was to be Pamela's masculine counterpart in virtue, and he also was to be rewarded. But Fielding had not proceeded far when a strange thing happened: he fell in love with his characters and completed his novel seriously. His narrative method differs from that of Defoe, which was autobiographic, and from that of Richardson, which was epistolary; he writes in the third person from the omniscient point of view, stepping in every now and then, in the first person, as stage-manager, to explain matters and receive our plaudits. He preserves in his technique the realism of Defoe and the "fine-feeling" of Richardson; but he modifies them both, making them subservient to plot. Realism with him takes the generous form of an epic depiction of contemporary men and manners; "fine-feeling" becomes good-humored tolerance of the unpremeditated frailties due to affection and physical passion, but stern caricature of and Homeric scoffing at the sins which arise from niggardliness and cant. In *Tom Jones* he smiles genially when he recounts the profligacies of his hero with Molly Seagrim; for the calculating meanness and deceit of Captain Blifil he has nothing but contempt.

His social sympathies are invariably with the serving and down-trodden class; he rarely loses an opportunity of revealing them as superior to their masters. Joseph Andrews has been robbed by highwaymen, stripped mother-naked and thrown in the ditch to die. He is overtaken by a coach, containing a lady and several gentlemen passen-

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gers. They are all willing to leave him in the ditch, until a lawyer explains to them that, if he should perish of cold, they may be held legally responsible. It is thereupon agreed that he must be carried to the next inn; but a new hindrance arises—he is mother-naked, and is too modest to enter and take a seat unless some one will lend him a coat.

“Though there were several great-coats about the coach, it was not easy to get over this difficulty. The two gentlemen complained they were cold, and could not spare a rag, the man of wit saying, with a laugh, that charity began at home; and the coachman, who had two great-coats spread under him, refused to lend either, lest they should be made bloody; the lady’s footman desired to be excused for the same reason, which the lady herself, notwithstanding her abhorrence of a naked man, approved; and it is more than probable that poor Joseph, who obstinately adhered to his modest resolution, must have perished, unless the postillion (*a lad who hath been since transported for robbing a hen-roost*) had voluntarily stripped off a great-coat, his only garment, at the same time swearing a great oath (for which he was rebuked by the passengers), ‘that he would rather ride in his shirt all his life than suffer a fellow-creature to lie in so miserable a condition.’ ”

Defoe delivered a sermon when he grew moral. Richardson melted into tears and uttered magnificent sentiments, which, after all, were nothing more than sentiments. Moreover, his arguments for morality were entirely mercantile, as became a London tradesman. What did Pamela’s boasted virtue amount to? Simply this, that she fought off abduction and attained marriage, thereby selling herself more dearly. Fielding saw through the sham of such rectitude. He brought to his task a sterling common-sense, and gave to the novel a virile purpose by making it the instrument of social satire.

Sterne's contribution (1713-1768) to the novel was indirect and is difficult to define. Neither he nor Smollett (1721-1771) wrote a novel proper in the modern and technical sense. Both excelled in humorous characterization and both wandered out of England, giving to English fiction the enfranchisement of cosmopolitan travel. Sterne borrowed Richardson's sentimentalism, added to it pathos, widened its field of application, came near making it ludicrous, and taught the sentimentalist to smile at himself. Smollett retrograded to the picaresque romance, but made it vigorous by the introduction of ruffianly portraits of contemporary types. He tried to be the English Cervantes, but for that his hand was too heavy. Neither Sterne nor Smollett appreciated the advantage of plot. In point of evolution in the history of the novel their work belongs to the period of Defoe.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) was the first English novelist to make *atmosphere* and *background* important elements in fiction; he was also the pioneer of the novel of rural life.

Robinson Crusoe, cast on a desert island, has nothing to tell us of the splendors of sky and sea. He is solely occupied with how he may make himself comfortable. The interest of what he has to tell is centred in the man himself, and has to do not so much with the discoveries he makes on the island as with the discoveries which he makes in himself. Professor Raleigh observes: "The tools and the Bible which have been saved from the wreck represent the two sides of his life, the practical and the religious, and it is only in the Bible that he finds God"—not in the beauty and loneliness of his surroundings. Any island in any latitude would have served Defoe's purpose, provided always it was deserted.

We are given to understand in *Pamela* that her tempta-

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tions took place in the country; Richardson makes no use of this fact. The background of a city would have added or detracted nothing from the ornamentation of the story.

Robert Louis Stevenson, in passing judgment on Fielding, finds the same lack: "As for landscape, he was content to underline stage directions, as might be done in a play-book—Tom and Molly retire into a practicable wood. . . . The larger motives are all unknown to him; he had not understood that the nature of landscape or spirit of the times could be for anything in a story; and so, naturally and rightly, he said nothing about them."

— The imparting of atmosphere and background may be done in one of two ways: directly, by inserting descriptive passages in purple patches; indirectly, which is far more difficult, by implication. Goldsmith's method in *The Vicar of Wakefield* is the latter.

Mr. Will Low supplies a good instance of implied atmosphere and background in *A Chronicle of Friendships*. In discussing *Kidnapped* with Stevenson, he mentioned that the quality which had impressed him most was the vivid description of the moorlands through which Alan and David fled. Whereupon Stevenson asserted that there was not in the chapters referred to one line purely descriptive of landscape, and insisted that his contention should be verified from the book. On so doing, it was found that Stevenson's statement was correct. Yet the memory which most readers retain of *Kidnapped*, when the plot itself has been forgotten, is the landscape—something which is only suggested and never described in detail.

So it is in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, published 1766, the appearance of the country is only hinted at; yet the book as a whole remains one of the most perfect pictures in English literature of rural life and pastoral contentment.

With the modern novelist setting, background, and period

have come to mean everything. Men go in search of them, find them, study them, and then plan out their plot. Seton Merriman goes to Poland, A. E. W. Mason to the Soudan, Hall Caine to Iceland, Robert Hichens to the Nile. Novelists become famed for writing about a certain territory; vast tracts of country are set aside and regarded as their peculiar preserves and private fictional property. Any attempt to use them as backgrounds on the part of another novelist is looked on as an encroachment. Kipling owns India, and Thomas Hardy Wessex. Moreover, the public is unwilling that they should write about any other territory than the one which first made them famous, and publishers regard such enterprise on their part with disfavor, because it is less financially profitable. In our day atmosphere has come to be the determining element in fiction.

It is having its revenge for the neglect measured out to it by the eighteenth century and, as a consequence, is making itself a nuisance. Of the legitimate uses of atmosphere Goldsmith was the discoverer in his rural masterpiece.

His example was not immediately followed, for a new school of fiction was growing up, commonly known as the School of Terror. It contributed very little structurally to technique, and did much to retard its legitimate development. It was in reality a harping back to the method of the Greek romances, wherein the chief narrative interest consists of "a succession of strange and improbable adventures. Indeed, as the primary object of the narrator was to *surprise by the incidents* he rehearsed, the strangeness of these was the chief object to which he directed his attention." To use Coleridge's words, the stock-in-trade of the Terrorists consisted of "horrific incidents, and mysterious villains (geniuses of supernatural intellect, if you will take the author's word for it, but on a level with the meanest ruffians of the condemned cells, if we are to judge

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by their actions and contrivances)—ruined castles, dungeons, trap-doors, skeletons, flesh-and-blood ghosts and perpetual moonshine.”

But a sane artistic motive lay at the back of this apparent madness. The realists had narrowed their field of endeavor by casting their situations for the most part in England, and always in the present; the romanticists revolted, and, unhampered by scholarship and equipped with little more than a faulty imagination, set out to explore remote countries and to recover the past. Horace Walpole (1717–1797) set this fashion when he published *The Castle of Otranto, a Gothic Story*, in 1764. He found many imitators, the most eminent among whom was a woman, Mrs. Radcliffe (1764–1823).

“Her ignorance of the world at the time when she wrote was complete and many-sided,” remarks Professor Raleigh. Her lack of knowledge had at least one advantage—it threw her back on her imagination. Men, scenery, incidents, everything in her books is created.

The feminine movement in fiction, which had been begun by a man, Richardson, she carried forward; the one thing which she knew absolutely for exploiting purposes was her own womanhood. So far, with the exception of Richardson, the novel had been handled from a man’s point of view. Man in the eighteenth century was essentially a coarse, free-living animal. The club and the coffee-tavern ruined home life, taking him away from his wife and children. At no time, probably, in English history, did the master of the house spend fewer hours with his family. In proof of this read Steele’s letters to his Molly, and Swift’s *Letter to a Very Young Lady on Her Marriage*. As a consequence, the eighteenth-century novel is altogether lacking in the note of domesticity. Woman was not to be justly represented until Jane Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice*.

Children, not being considered of sufficient importance to introduce into fiction as characters, had to wait still longer for their interpreter, until the coming of Charles Dickens, though Henry Brooke made the attempt as early as 1766 in *The Fool of Quality*.

Probably the great contemporary success of Mrs. Radcliffe is partly to be accounted for by the fact that she was the first English novelist to give expression to woman's emotional temperament, albeit she wrote in hysterics and conceived her characters theatrically. Women must have formed at all times the major portion of the audience for fiction; no man ever had the leisure or patience to read such lengthy works as Madelaine de Scudéry's *Grand Cyrus*, which covers one million eight hundred thousand words. It seems highly probable that the novel's steady progress, from the sentimentalism of Richardson to the overdone psychology and motive-analysis of to-day, is to be traced to the conscientiousness of the female reader—the supply has been shaped by the majority's demand, and the majority is feminine.

The School of Terror, largely under Mrs. Radcliffe's guidance, contributed three new ornaments to the English novel: first, the direct description of scenery; second, the use of scenery to interpret moods; third, the free employment of imagination, especially as applied to history and the supernatural.

Mrs. Radcliffe and her followers are never in touch with this world. Their landscapes, situations, and history are all crude and unactual; but their feeling for Nature and the use which they made of imagination to recreate things unexperienced and of the past paved the way for Sir Walter Scott and the historical novel based on scholarship.

The feminine movement in English fiction found its first classic exponent in Jane Austen (1775–1817); she returned



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to realism for her inspiration and definitely established the novel of domestic comedy—a branch of fiction in which women have proved themselves men's superiors. All through the eighteenth century women had been essaying the novelist's task, but most of them had made the error of imitating the male attitude to the world instead of recording such things as were essential to themselves.

In 1778 Frances Burney (1752–1840) published *Evelina*, thereby founding the school which Jane Austen made classic and permanent. Its object was to present life and the male species as they appear when viewed through the eyes of a woman.

For this task Jane Austen was exceptionally well fitted. Her narrowness of early environment had trained in her powers of minute observation. Small things had made up the sum-total of her interests and had been magnified into things of importance. Meeting with few people, she had had leisure to study microscopically the mainsprings of character. She brought to her undertaking of novelist the slender stock of momentous trifles—not unlike the contents of a lady's work-basket—which any intelligent girl might glean for herself in any English home of the middle class. She sits apart from her created personalities, observing and recording, never merging her own individuality. Unlike Fielding, who shared her third-person viewpoint of narration, she never interrupts in her character of author to explain matters. Her absolute self-poise and omniscience are Shakespearian—Shakespeare in a lady's drawing-room, from which he never stirs. This is the chief fault which Edward FitzGerald has to find with her, that she is always to be found neatly attired and primly seated in the one boundaried locality.

"She is capital," he writes, "as far as she goes; but she never goes out of the parlor. If but Magnus Troil, or Jack

Bunce, or even one of Fielding's brutes, would but dash in upon the gentility and swear a round oath or two!"

But in refusing admittance to Fielding's brutes she proved herself an artist. Oaths and masculine violence did not come within the province of her maidenly knowledge. She compelled herself to write only of such things as she knew absolutely; and for this reason she created a vivid illusion of intense reality, in which she set a standard of excellence for all succeeding writers. Charlotte Brontë has surpassed her in the depiction of feminine passion, and George Eliot in philosophic outlook, but for recording the points of an average woman's observation and for truthfulness in domestic satire she stands in an uncontested class.

It now remained for Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) to prove to the world that realism and romanticism were not of necessity antagonistic. "Why," asks Marion Crawford, "should a good novel not combine romance and reality in just proportions? . . . Both are included in everyday life, which would be a very dull affair without something of the one, and would be decidedly incoherent without the other."

Sir Walter Scott proved that this could be accomplished, and that by the combination the novel gained both in popularity and artistic effect. The past had been regarded hitherto as an uncharted wonderland, from wandering in which the romanticist might come back, in much the same way as Sir John Mandeville did from the remoter quarters of the actual world, to narrate such stories as he chose, with none to challenge. Sir Walter Scott's purpose in the novel was to recreate the past realistically. He brought to his task the romanticist's imagination and love of scenery, the historian's exact and detailed scholarship, and the realist's power over plot-construction and life-like

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presentation of seeming facts. As proofs of his success, his fictional presentations of Louis XI., Elizabeth, and James I. pass currency as portraits more actual than those of the professed historian, and have indeed colored their characters as interpreted by history itself.

With Scott the basal technique of the novel was completed; which is not to say that it had reached the high-water mark of its development, but that it had been endowed with all its tendencies. Technique has since been rendered more exact, and specialization has set in along certain lines; but with Scott all the narrative points of view had been experimented—the autobiographic, the epistolary, and the omniscient—and all the essentials of ornamentation had been embodied.

II  
Love Scenes

7

- Pamela's Virtue is Rewarded.** *Samuel Richardson* (1689-1761)
- Rebecca the Jewess.** *Sir Walter Scott* (1771-1832)
- The Rev. Mr. Collins Talks of Marriage.** *Jane Austen* (1775-1817)
- Remorse.** *Nathaniel Hawthorne* (1807-1864)
- Henry Esmond Meets Beatrix.** *William Makepeace Thackeray* (1811-1863)
- Death of the Child-Wife.** *Charles Dickens* (1812-1870)
- The Princess Claelia Makes Love to Gerard.** *Charles Reade* (1814-1884)
- How Rochester Proposed to Jane Eyre.** *Charlotte Brontë* (1816-1855)
- Forest Love.** *Charles Kingsley* (1819-1875)
- Renunciation.** *George Eliot* (1819-1880)
- The Magnetic Age.** *George Meredith* (1828-1909)
- Temptation.** *J. Henry Shorthouse* (1834-1903)
- Tess and Angel Clare.** *Thomas Hardy* (1840)
- "My Many Wanderings Were Over."** *William Hale White* (1830)

## PAMELA'S VIRTUE IS REWARDED<sup>1</sup>

*Samuel Richardson (1689-1761)*

[Pamela's virtuous resistance against her young master's importunate temptations has so operated upon his better nature that he has offered himself to her in marriage. The wedding morning has been reached and Pamela, being only a serving-maid, is filled with scruples and hesitations.]

*Thursday, six o'clock in the morning.*

**I** FANCY my master has not slept much neither; for I heard him up, and walking about his chamber, ever since break of day. To be sure, good gentleman! he must have some concern, as well as I; for here he is going to marry a poor, foolish, unworthy girl, brought up on the charity, as one may say (at least bounty), of his worthy family! And this foolish girl must be, to all intents and purposes, after twelve o'clock this day, as much his wife as if he were to marry a duchess! And here he must stand the shocks of common reflection! The great Mr. B—— has done finely! He has married his poor servant *wench!* will some say. The ridicule and rude jests of his equals, and companions too, he must stand; and the disdain of his relations, and indignation of Lady Davers, his lofty sister! Dear, good gentleman! he will have enough to do, to be sure! Oh, how shall I merit all these

<sup>1</sup> From *Pamela*.

things at his hand? I can only do the best I can; and pray to God to reward him; and resolve to love him with a pure heart, and serve him with a sincere obedience. I hope the dear gentleman will continue to love me for *this*; for, alas! I have nothing else to offer. But, as I can hardly expect so great a blessing, if I can be secure from his contempt, I shall not be unfortunate; and must bear his indifference, if his rich friends should inspire him with it, and proceed with doing my duty with cheerfulness.

*Half an hour past eight o'clock.*

My good, dear master, my kind friend, my generous benefactor, my worthy protector, and, oh! all the good words in one, my affectionate husband that is soon to be—(be curbed in, my proud heart, know thyself, and be conscious of thy unworthiness!)—has just left me with the kindest, tenderest expressions and gentlest behaviour that ever blest a happy maiden. He approached me with a sort of reined-in rapture. My Pamela! said he, may I just ask after your employment? Don't let me chide my dear girl this day, however. The two parsons will be here to breakfast with us at nine; and yet you are not a bit dressed! Why this absence of mind, and sweet irresolution?

Why, indeed, sir, said I, I will set about a reformation this instant. He saw the common-prayer book lying on the window. I hope, said he, my lovely maiden has been conning the lesson she is by-and-by to repeat. Have you not, Pamela? and clasped his arms about me and kissed me. Indeed, sir, said I, I have been reading over the solemn service. And what thinks my fairest (for so he called me) of it? Oh, sir, 'tis very awful, and makes one shudder to reflect upon it! No wonder, said he, it should affect my sweet Pamela: I have been looking into it this morning, and I can't say but I

think it a solemn but very suitable service. But this I tell my dear love, continued he, and again clasped me to him, there is not a tittle in it that I cannot joyfully subscribe to; and *that*, my dear Pamela, should make you easy, and join cheerfully in it with me. I kissed his dear hand. Oh, my generous, kind protector, said I, how gracious is it to confirm thus the doubting of your poor servant! which apprehends nothing so much as her own unworthiness of the honour and blessing that await her. He was pleased to say, I know well, my dearest creature, that, according to the liberties we people of fortune generally give ourselves, I have promised a great deal, when I say so. But I would not have said it, if deliberately, I could not with all my heart. So banish from your mind all doubt and uneasiness; let a generous confidence in me take place; and let me *see* it does, by your cheerfulness in this day's solemn business; and then I will love you forever!

May God Almighty, sir, said I, reward all your goodness to me! That is all I can say. But, oh! how kind it is in you to supply the want of the presence and comfortings of a dear mother, of a loving sister, or of the kind companions of my own sex, which most maidens have, to soothe their anxieties on the so-near approach of so awful a solemnity! You, sir, are all these tender relations in one to me! Your condescensions and kindness shall, if possible, embolden me to look up to you without that sweet terror, that must confound poor, bashful maidens on such an occasion, when they are surrendered up to a *more* doubtful happiness, and to half-strange men, whose good faith, and good usage of them, must be *less* experienced, and is all involved in the dark bosom of futurity, and only to be proved by the event.

This, my dear Pamela, said he, is most kindly said! It shows me that you enter gratefully into my intention.



For I would, by my conduct, supply all these dear relations to you; and I voluntarily promise, from my heart, to you, what I think I could not, with such assured resolutions of performance to the highest-born lady in the kingdom. For let me tell my sweet girl that, after having been long tossed by the boisterous winds of a more culpable passion, I have now conquered it, and am not so much the victim of your beauty, all charming as you are, as of your virtue; and therefore may more boldly promise for myself, having so stable a foundation for my affection, which, should this outward beauty fail, will increase with your virtue and shine forth the brighter, as that is more illustriously displayed by the augmented opportunities which the condition you are now entering into will afford you. Oh, the dear, charming man! How nobly, how encouragingly kind was all this!

I could not suitably express myself, and he said: I see my girl is at a loss for words! I doubt not your kind acceptance of my declarations. And when I have acted too much the part of a libertine formerly, for you to look back without some anxiety, I ought not, being now happily convicted, to say less. But why loses my girl her time? I will now only add, that I hope for many happy years to make good, by my conduct, what so willingly flows from my lips.

He kissed me again, and said: But, whatever you do, Pamela, be cheerful; for else, maybe, of the small company we shall have some one, not knowing how to account for your too nice modesty, will think there is *some* other person in the world whose addresses would be still *more* agreeable to you.

This he said with an air of sweetness and pleasantry; but it alarmed me exceedingly, and made me resolve to appear as calm and cheerful as possible. For this was,

indeed, a most affecting expression, and enough to make me, if anything can, behave as I ought, and to force my idle fears to give way to hopes so much better grounded. And I began almost, on this occasion, to wish Mr. Williams were not to marry me, lest I should behave like a fool; and so be liable to an imputation, which I should be most unworthy, if I deserved.

So I set about dressing me instantly; and he sent Mrs. Jewkes to assist me. But I am never long a dressing, when I set about it; and my master has now given me a hint, that will, for half an hour more, at least, keep my spirits in a brisk circulation. Yet it concerns me a little too, lest he should have any the least shadow of a doubt that I am not, mind and person, entirely his.

And so being now ready, and not called to breakfast, I sat down and wrote thus far.

I might have mentioned, that I dressed myself in a rich white satin night-gown that had been my good lady's, and my best head-clothes, etc. I have got such a knack of writing, that when I am by myself, I cannot sit without a pen in my hand. But I am now called to breakfast. I suppose the gentlemen are come. Now, courage, Pamela! Remember thou art upon thy good behaviour! Fie upon it, my heart begins to flutter again! Foolish heart, lie still! Never, sure, was any maiden's perverse heart under so little command as mine! It gave itself away, at first, without my leave; it has been, for weeks, pressing me with its wishes; and yet now, when it should be happy itself, and make me so, it is throb, throb, throb, like a little fool! and filling me with such unseasonable misgivings as abate the rising comforts of all my better prospects.

REBECCA THE JEWESS<sup>1</sup>*Sir Walter Scott* (1771–1832)

[Rebecca and her father, Isaac of York, having been captured by a party of Normans, are imprisoned in the castle of Front-de-Bœuf. Brian de Bois-Guilbert, a Knight Templar, one of the captors, is in love with Rebecca.]

Rebecca, however erroneously taught to interpret the promises of Scripture to the chosen people of Heaven, did not err in supposing the present to be their hour of trial, or in trusting that the children of Zion would be one day called in with the fulness of the Gentiles. In the meanwhile, all around her showed that their present state was that of punishment and probation, and that it was their especial duty to suffer without sinning. Thus prepared to consider herself as the victim of misfortune, Rebecca had early reflected upon her own state, and schooled her mind to meet the dangers which she had probably to encounter.

The prisoner trembled, however, and changed color, when a step was heard on the stair, and the door of the turret-chamber slowly opened, and a tall man, dressed as one of those banditti to whom they owed their misfortune, slowly entered, and shut the door behind him; his cap, pulled down upon his brows, concealed the upper part of his face, and he held his mantle in such a manner as to muffle the rest. In this guise, as if prepared for the execution of some deed, at the thought of which he was himself ashamed, he stood before the affrighted prisoner; yet, ruffian as his dress bespoke him, he seemed at a loss to express what purpose had brought him thither, so that

<sup>1</sup> From *Ivanhoe*.

Rebecca, making an effort upon herself, had time to anticipate his explanation. She had already unclasped two costly bracelets and a collar, which she hastened to proffer to the supposed outlaw, concluding naturally that to gratify his avarice was to bespeak his favor.

"Take these," she said, "good friend, and for God's sake be merciful to me and my aged father! These ornaments are of value, yet are they trifling to what he would bestow to obtain our dismissal from this castle, free and uninjured."

"Fair flower of Palestine," replied the outlaw, "these pearls are orient, but they yield in whiteness to your teeth: the diamonds are brilliant, but they cannot match your eyes; and ever since I have taken up this wild trade I have made a vow to prefer beauty to wealth."

"Do not do yourself such wrong," said Rebecca; "take ransom and have mercy! Gold will purchase you pleasure—to misuse us could only bring thee remorse. My father will willingly satiate thy utmost wishes; and if thou wilt act wisely, thou mayest purchase with our spoils thy restoration to civil society—mayest obtain pardon for past errors, and be placed beyond the necessity of committing more."

"It is well spoken," replied the outlaw, in French, finding it difficult probably to sustain, in Saxon, a conversation which Rebecca had opened in that language; "but know, bright lily of the vale of Baca, that thy father is already in the hands of a powerful alchemist, who knows how to convert into gold and silver even the rusty bars of a dungeon grate. The venerable Isaac is subjected to an alembic, which will distil from him all he holds dear, without any assistance from my requests or thy entreaty. Thy ransom must be paid by love and beauty, and in no other coin will I accept it."

"Thou art no outlaw," said Rebecca, in the same lan-

guage in which he addressed her; "no outlaw had refused such offers. No outlaw in this land uses the dialect in which thou hast spoken. Thou art no outlaw, but a Norman—a Norman, noble perhaps in birth—oh, be so in thy actions, and cast off this fearful mask of outrage and violence!"

"And thou, who canst guess so truly," said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, dropping the mantle from his face, "art no true daughter of Israel, but in all, save youth and beauty, a very Witch of Endor. I am not an outlaw, then, fair Rose of Sharon. And I am one who will be more prompt to hang thy neck and arms with pearls and diamonds, which so well become them, than to deprive thee of these ornaments."

"What wouldst thou have of me," said Rebecca, "if not my wealth? We can have nought in common between us—you are a Christian—I am a Jewess. Our union were contrary to the laws alike of the church and the synagogue."

"It were so, indeed," replied the Templar, laughing; "wed with a Jewess? *Despardieux!* Not if she were the Queen of Sheba. And know, besides, sweet daughter of Zion, that were the most Christian king to offer me his most Christian daughter, with Languedoc for a dowry, I could not wed her. It is against my vow to love any maiden otherwise than *par amours*, as I will love thee. I am a Templar. Behold the cross of my holy Order."

"Darest thou appeal to it," said Rebecca, "on an occasion like the present?"

"And if I do so," said the Templar, "it concerns not thee, who art no believer in the blessed sign of our salvation."

"I believe as my fathers taught," said Rebecca, "and may God forgive my belief if erroneous! But you, Sir Knight, what is *yours*, when you appeal without scruple

to that which you deem most holy, even while you are about to transgress the most solemn of your vows as a knight and as a man of religion?"

"It is gravely and well preached, O daughter of Sirach!" answered the Templar; "but, gentle Ecclesiastica, thy narrow Jewish prejudices make thee blind to our high privilege. Marriage were an enduring crime on the part of a Templar; but what lesser folly I may practise I shall speedily be absolved from at the next Preceptory of our Order. Not the wisest of monarchs, not his father, whose examples you must needs allow are weighty, claimed wider privileges than we poor soldiers of the Temple of Zion have won by our zeal in its defence. The protectors of Solomon's Temple may claim license by the example of Solomon."

"If thou readest the Scripture," said the Jewess, "and the lives of the saints, only to justify thine own license and profligacy, thy crime is like that of him who extracts poison from the most healthful and necessary herbs."

The eyes of the Templar flashed fire at this reproof. "Hearken!" he said, "Rebecca; I have hitherto spoken mildly to thee, but now my language shall be that of a conqueror. Thou art the captive of my bow and spear—subject to my will by the laws of all nations; nor will I abate an inch of my right, or abstain from taking by violence what thou refusest to entreaty or necessity."

"Stand back," said Rebecca—"stand back, and hear me ere thou offerest to commit a sin so deadly! My strength thou mayest indeed overpower, for God made women weak, and trusted their defence to man's generosity. But I will proclaim thy villany, Templar, from one end of Europe to the other. I will owe to the superstition of thy brethren what their compassion might refuse me. Each Preceptory—each Chapter of thy Order—shall learn that, like a heretic, thou hast sinned with a Jewess. Those who

tremble not at thy crime will hold thee accursed for having so far dishonored the cross thou wearest as to follow a daughter of my people."

"Thou art keen-witted, Jewess," replied the Templar, well aware of the truth of what she spoke, and that the rules of his Order condemned in the most positive manner, and under high penalties, such intrigues as he now prosecuted, and that, in some instances, even degradation had followed upon it; "thou art sharp-witted," he said; "but loud must be thy voice of complaint if it is heard beyond the iron walls of this castle; within these, murmurs, laments, appeals to justice, and screams for help die alike silent away. One thing only can save thee, Rebecca. Submit to thy fate—embrace our religion, and thou shalt go forth in such state that many a Norman lady shall yield as well in pomp as in beauty to the favorite of the best lance among the defenders of the Temple."

"Submit to my fate!" said Rebecca—"and, sacred Heaven! to what fate?—embrace thy religion! and what religion can it be that harbors such a villain?—*thou* the best lance of the Templars!—craven knight!—forsworn priest! I spit at thee, and I defy thee. The God of Abraham's promise hath opened an escape to his daughter—even from this abyss of infamy!"

As she spoke she threw open the latticed window which led to the bartisan, and in an instant after stood on the very verge of the parapet, with not the slightest screen between her and the tremendous depth below. Unprepared for such a desperate effort, for she had hitherto stood perfectly motionless, Bois-Guilbert had neither time to intercept nor to stop her. As he offered to advance, she exclaimed: "Remain where thou art, proud Templar, or at thy choice advance!—one foot nearer, and I plunge myself from the precipice; my body shall be crushed out

of the very form of humanity upon the stones of that courtyard ere it become the victim of thy brutality!"

As she spoke this she clasped her hands and extended them toward heaven, as if imploring mercy on her soul before she made the final plunge. The Templar hesitated, and a resolution which had never yielded to pity or distress gave way to his admiration of her fortitude. "Come down," he said, "rash girl! I swear by earth, and sea, and sky, I will offer thee no offence."

"I will not trust thee, Templar," said Rebecca; "thou hast taught me better how to estimate the virtues of thine Order. The next Preceptory would grant thee absolution for an oath the keeping of which concerned nought but the honor or the dishonor of a miserable Jewish maiden."

"You do me injustice," exclaimed the Templar, fervently; "I swear to you by the name which I bear—by the cross on my bosom—by the sword on my side—by the ancient crest of my fathers do I swear, I will do thee no injury whatsoever! If not for thyself, yet for thy father's sake forbear! I will be his friend, and in this castle he will need a powerful one."

"Alas!" said Rebecca, "I know it but too well—dare I trust thee?"

"May my arms be reversed, and my name dishonored," said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, "if thou shalt have reason to complain of me! Many a law, many a commandment, have I broken, but my word never."

"I will, then, trust thee," said Rebecca, "thus far"; and she descended from the verge of the battlement, but remained standing close by one of the embrasures, or *machicolles*, as they were then called. "Here," she said, "I take my stand. Remain where thou art, and if thou shalt attempt to diminish by one step the distance now between us thou shalt see that the Jewish maiden will



rather trust her soul with God than her honor to the Templar!"

While Rebecca spoke thus, her high and firm resolve, which corresponded so well with the expressive beauty of her countenance, gave to her looks, air, and manner a dignity that seemed more than mortal. Her glance quailed not, her cheek blanched not, for the fear of a fate so instant and so horrible; on the contrary, the thought that she had her fate at her command, and could escape at will from infamy to death, gave a yet deeper color of carnation to her complexion, and a yet more brilliant fire to her eye. Bois-Guilbert, proud himself and high-spirited, thought he had never beheld beauty so animated and so commanding.

"Let there be peace between us, Rebecca," he said.

"Peace, if thou wilt," answered Rebecca—"peace—but with this space between."

"Thou needest no longer fear me," said Bois-Guilbert.

"I fear thee not," replied she; "thanks to him that reared this dizzy tower so high, that nought could fall from it and live—thanks to him, and to the God of Israel—I fear thee not."

"Thou dost me injustice," said the Templar; "by earth, sea, and sky, thou dost me injustice! I am not naturally that which you have seen me, hard, selfish, and relentless. It was woman that taught me cruelty, and on woman therefore I have exercised it; but not upon such as thou. Hear me, Rebecca. Never did knight take lance in his hand with a heart more devoted to the lady of his love than Brian de Bois-Guilbert. She, the daughter of a petty baron, who boasted for all his domains but a ruinous tower, and an unproductive vineyard, and some few leagues of the barren Landes of Bordeaux, her name was known wherever deeds of arms were done, known wider than that of many a lady's that had a county for a dowry.

Yes," he continued, pacing up and down the little platform, with an animation in which he seemed to lose all consciousness of Rebecca's presence, "yes, my deeds, my danger, my blood, made the name of Adelaide de Montemare known from the court of Castile to that of Byzantium. And how was I requited! When I returned with my dear-bought honors, purchased by toil and blood, I found her wedded to a Gascon squire, whose name was never heard beyond the limits of his own paltry domain! Truly did I love her, and bitterly did I revenge me of her broken faith! But my revenge has recoiled on myself. Since that day I have separated myself from life and its ties—my manhood must know no domestic home—must be soothed by no affectionate wife—my age must know no kindly hearth—my grave must be solitary, and no offspring must outlive me, to bear the ancient name of Bois-Guilbert. At the feet of my superior I have laid down the right of self-action—the privilege of independence. The Templar, a serf in all but the name, can possess neither lands nor goods, and lives, moves, and breathes but at the will and pleasure of another."

"Alas!" said Rebecca, "what advantages could compensate for such an absolute sacrifice?"

"The power of vengeance, Rebecca," replied the Templar, "and the prospects of ambition."

"An evil recompense," said Rebecca, "for the surrender of the rights which are dearest to humanity."

"Say not so, maiden," answered the Templar; "revenge is a feast for the gods! And if they have reserved it, as priests tell us, to themselves, it is because they hold it an enjoyment too precious for the possession of mere mortals. And ambition! it is a temptation which could disturb even the bliss of heaven itself." He paused a moment, and then added: "Rebecca! she who could prefer death to dishonor

must have a proud and a powerful soul. Mine thou must be! Nay, start not," he added; "it must be with thine own consent, and on thine own terms. Thou must consent to share with me hopes more extended than can be viewed from the throne of a monarch! Hear me ere you answer, and judge ere you refuse. The Templar loses, as thou hast said, his social rights, his power of free agency, but he becomes a member and a limb of a mighty body, before which thrones already tremble—even as the single drop of rain which mixes with the sea becomes an individual part of that resistless ocean which undermines rocks and engulfs royal armadas. Such a swelling flood is that powerful league. Of this mighty Order I am no mean member, but already one of the Chief Commanders, and may well aspire one day to hold the baton of Grand Master. The poor soldiers of the Temple will not alone place their foot upon the necks of kings—a hemp-sandalled monk can do that. Our mailed step shall ascend their throne—our gauntlet shall wrench the sceptre from their grip. Not the reign of your vainly expected Messiah offers such power to your dispersed tribes as my ambition may aim at. I have sought but a kindred spirit to share it, and I have found such in thee."

"Sayest thou this to one of my people?" answered Rebecca. "Bethink thee—"

"Answer me not," said the Templar, "by urging the difference of our creeds; within our secret conclaves we hold these nursery tales in derision. Think not we long remain blind to the idiotical folly of our founders, who forswore every delight of life for the pleasure of dying martyrs by hunger, thirst, and by pestilence, and by the swords of savages, while they vainly strove to defend a barren desert, valuable only in the eyes of superstition. Our Order soon adopted bolder and wider views, and found

out a better indemnification for our sacrifices. Our immense possessions in every kingdom of Europe, our high military fame, which brings within our circle the flower of chivalry from every Christian clime—these are dedicated to ends of which our pious founders little dreamed, and which are equally concealed from such weak spirits as embrace our Order on the ancient principles, and whose superstition makes them our passive tools. But I will not farther withdraw the veil of our mysteries. That bugle-sound announces something which may require my presence. Think on what I have said. Farewell! I do not say forgive me the violence I have threatened, for it was necessary to the display of thy character. Gold can be only known by the application of the touchstone. I will soon return, and hold further conference with thee.”

He re-entered the turret-chamber, and descended the stair, leaving Rebecca scarcely more terrified at the prospect of the death to which she had been so lately exposed than at the furious ambition of the bold, bad man in whose power she found herself so unhappily placed. When she entered the turret-chamber her first duty was to return thanks to the God of Jacob for the protection which he had afforded her, and to implore its continuance for her and for her father.

#### THE REV. MR. COLLINS TALKS OF MARRIAGE<sup>1</sup>

*Jane Austen (1775–1817)*

“Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in

<sup>1</sup> From *Pride and Prejudice*.

my eyes had there *not* been this little unwillingness; but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble; my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But, before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it will be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying—and, moreover, for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did."

The idea of Mr. Collins, with all his solemn composure, being run away with by his feelings, made Elizabeth so near laughing that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt to stop him further, and he continued:

"My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and, thirdly—which, perhaps, I ought to have mentioned earlier—that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honor of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked, too!) on this subject; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford—between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss de Bourgh's footstool—that she said, 'Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. Choose properly, choose a gentle woman, for *my* sake; and for your *own*, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a

woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her.' Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe; and your wit and vivacity I think must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favor of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighborhood, where, I assure you, there are many amiable young women. But, the fact is, that being as I am to inherit this estate after the death of your honored father (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible, when the melancholy event takes place—which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now, nothing remains for me but to assure you, in the most animated language, of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the four per cents., which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married."

It was absolutely necessary to interrupt him now.

"You are too hasty, sir," she cried. "You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without further loss

of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honor of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them."

"I am not now to learn," replied Mr. Collins, with a formal wave of the hand, "that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favor; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third time. I am, therefore, by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long."

"Upon my word, sir," cried Elizabeth, "your hope is rather an extraordinary one, after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so. Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation."

"Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so," said Mr. Collins, very gravely—"but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disprove of you. And you may be certain that when I have the honor of seeing her again I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications."

"Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say. I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand, do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your

feelings with regard to my family, and may take possession of Longbourn estate whenever it falls, without any self-reproach. This matter may be considered, therefore, as finally settled." And rising as she thus spoke, she would have quitted the room, had not Mr. Collins thus addressed her:

"When I do myself the honor of speaking to you next on the subject, I shall hope to receive a more favorable answer than you have now given me; though I am far from accusing you of cruelty at present, because I know it to be the established custom of your sex to reject a man on the first application; and, perhaps, you have even now said as much to encourage my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character."

"Really, Mr. Collins," cried Elizabeth, with some warmth, "you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one."

"You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses is merely a thing of course. My reasons for believing it are briefly these: It does not appear to me that my hand is unworthy your acceptance, or that the establishment I can offer would be any other than highly desirable. My situation in life, my connections with the family of De Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favor; and you should take it into further consideration that, in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you. Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must therefore conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute



it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females."

"I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretensions whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honor you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart."

"You are uniformly charming!" cried he, with an air of awkward gallantry; "and I am persuaded that when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents my proposals will not fail of being acceptable."

To such perseverance in wilful self-deception Elizabeth would make no reply, and immediately and in silence withdrew, determined, that if he persisted in considering her repeated refusals as flattering encouragement, to apply to her father, whose negative might be uttered in such a manner as must be decisive, and whose behavior at least could not be mistaken for the affectation and coquetry of an elegant female.

#### REMORSE<sup>1</sup>

*Nathaniel Hawthorne (1807-1864)*

[Hester Prynne, the wearer of the Scarlet Letter, the initial of the name of her sin, has gone out into the forest to meet the man who brought about her ruin, the Rev. Arthur Dimmesdale. She has her little daughter Pearl, the fruit of their

<sup>1</sup> From *The Scarlet Letter*.

folly, with her. It is seven years since she was openly branded as an outcast by the wearing of the Scarlet Letter; in all that time Dimmesdale has never come forward to share her shame, and she has kept his secret. The paternity of the child is known to only one other person besides the guilty parties—to Roger Chillingworth, the physician of the colony. Dimmesdale is unaware of his knowledge, and Chillingworth, for the sake of a sullen and more cruel punishment, has kept silent.]

Slowly as the minister walked, he had almost gone by before Hester Prynne could gather voice enough to attract his observation. At length, she succeeded.

"Arthur Dimmesdale!" she said, faintly at first; then louder, but hoarsely, "Arthur Dimmesdale!"

"Who speaks?" answered the minister.

Gathering himself quickly up, he stood more erect, like a man taken by surprise in a mood to which he was reluctant to have witnesses. Throwing his eyes anxiously in the direction of the voice, he indistinctly beheld a form under the trees, clad in garments so sombre, and so little relieved from the gray twilight into which the clouded sky and the heavy foliage had darkened the noontide, that he knew not whether it were a woman or a shadow. It may be that his pathway through life was haunted thus, by a spectre that had stolen out from among his thoughts.

He made a step nigher, and discovered the scarlet letter.

"Hester! Hester Prynne!" said he. "Is it thou? Art thou in life?"

"Even so!" she answered. "In such life as has been mine these seven years past! And thou, Arthur Dimmesdale, dost thou yet live?"

It was no wonder that they thus questioned one another's actual and bodily existence, and even doubted of their own. So strangely did they meet, in the dim wood, that it was like the first encounter, in the world beyond the

grave, of two spirits who had been intimately connected in their former life, but now stood coldly shuddering, in mutual dread, as not yet familiar with their state, nor wonted to the companionship of disembodied beings. Each a ghost, and awe-stricken at the other ghost! They were awe-stricken likewise at themselves; because the crisis flung back to them their consciousness, and revealed to each heart its history and experience, as life never does, except at such breathless epochs. The soul beheld its features in the mirror of the passing moment. It was with fear, and tremulously, and, as it were, by a slow, reluctant necessity, that Arthur Dimmesdale put forth his hand, chill as death, and touched the chill hand of Hester Prynne. The grasp, cold as it was, took away what was dreariest in the interview. They now felt themselves, at least, inhabitants of the same sphere.

Without a word more spoken—neither he nor she assuming the guidance, but with an unexpressed consent—they glided back into the shadow of the woods, whence Hester had emerged, and sat down on the heap of moss where she and Pearl had before been sitting. When they found voice to speak, it was, at first, only to utter remarks and inquiries such as any two acquaintances might have made, about the gloomy sky, the threatening storm, and, next, the health of each. Thus they went onward, not boldly, but step by step, into the themes that were brooding deepest in their hearts. So long estranged by fate and circumstances, they needed something slight and casual to run before and throw open the doors of intercourse, so that their real thoughts might be led across the threshold.

After a while, the minister fixed his eyes on Hester Prynne's.

"Hester," said he, "hast thou found peace?"

She smiled drearily, looking down upon her bosom.

"Hast thou?" she asked.

"None!—nothing but despair!" he answered. "What else could I look for, being what I am, and leading such a life as mine? Were I an atheist—a man devoid of conscience—a wretch with coarse and brutal instincts—I might have found peace, long ere now. Nay, I never should have lost it! But, as matters stand with my soul, whatever of good capacity there originally was in me, all of God's gifts that were the choicest have become the ministers of spiritual torment. Hester, I am most miserable!"

"The people reverence thee," said Hester. "And surely thou workest good among them! Doth this bring thee no comfort?"

"More misery, Hester!—only the more misery!" answered the clergyman, with a bitter smile. "As concerns the good which I may appear to do, I have no faith in it. It must needs be a delusion. What can a ruined soul, like mine, effect toward the redemption of other souls?—or a polluted soul toward their purification? And as for the people's reverence, would that it were turned to scorn and hatred! Canst thou deem it, Hester, a consolation, that I must stand up in my pulpit, and meet so many eyes turned upward to my face, as if the light of heaven were beaming from it!—must see my flock hungry for the truth, and listening to my words as if a tongue of Pentecost were speaking!—and then look inward, and discern the black reality of what they idolize? I have laughed, in bitterness and agony of heart, at the contrast between what I seem and what I am! And Satan laughs at it!"

"You wrong yourself in this," said Hester, gently. "You have deeply and sorely repented. Your sin is left behind you, in the days long past. Your present life is not less holy, in very truth, than it seems in people's eyes. Is there no reality in the penitence thus sealed and wit-

nessed by good works? And wherefore should it not bring you peace?"

"No, Hester, no!" replied the clergyman. "There is no substance in it! It is cold and dead, and can do nothing for me! Of penance, I have had enough! Of penitence, there has been none! Else, I should long ago have thrown off these garments of mock holiness, and have shown myself to mankind as they will see me at the judgment-seat. Happy are you, Hester, that wear the scarlet letter openly upon your bosom! Mine burns in secret! Thou little knowest what a relief it is, after the torment of a seven years' cheat, to look into an eye that recognizes me for what I am! Had I one friend—or were it my worst enemy!—to whom, when sickened with the praises of all other men, I could daily betake myself, and be known as the vilest of all sinners, methinks my soul might keep itself alive thereby. Even thus much of truth would save me! But, now, it is all falsehood!—all emptiness!—all death!"

Hester Prynne looked into his face, but hesitated to speak. Yet, uttering his long-restrained emotions so vehemently as he did, his words here offered her the very point of circumstances in which to interpose what she came to say. She conquered her fears, and spoke.

"Such a friend as thou hast even now wished for," said she, "with whom to weep over thy sin, thou hast in me, the partner of it!" Again she hesitated, but brought out the words with an effort. "Thou hast long had such an enemy, and dwellest with him, under the same roof!"

The minister started to his feet, gasping for breath, and clutching at his heart, as if he would have torn it out of his bosom.

"Ha! What sayest thou!" cried he. "An enemy! And under my own roof! What mean you?"

Hester Prynne was now fully sensible of the deep injury for which she was responsible to this unhappy man, in permitting him to lie for so many years, or, indeed, for a single moment, at the mercy of one whose purposes could not be other than malevolent. The very contiguity of his enemy, beneath whatever mask the latter might conceal himself, was enough to disturb the magnetic sphere of a being so sensitive as Arthur Dimmesdale. There had been a period when Hester was less alive to this consideration; or, perhaps, in the misanthropy of her own trouble, she left the minister to bear what she might picture to herself as a more tolerable doom. But of late, since the night of his vigil, all her sympathies toward him had been both softened and invigorated. She now read his heart more accurately. She doubted not that the continual presence of Roger Chillingworth—the secret poison of his malignity, infecting all the air about him; and his authorized interference, as a physician, with the minister's physical and spiritual infirmities—that these bad opportunities had been turned to a cruel purpose. By means of them the sufferer's conscience had been kept in an irritated state, the tendency of which was, not to cure by wholesome pain, but to disorganize and corrupt his spiritual being. Its result, on earth, could hardly fail to be insanity, and, hereafter, that eternal alienation from the Good and True, of which madness is perhaps the earthly type.

Such was the ruin to which she had brought the man, once—nay, why should we not speak it?—still so passionately loved! Hester felt that the sacrifice of the clergyman's good name, and death itself, as she had already told Roger Chillingworth, would have been infinitely preferable to the alternative which she had taken upon herself to choose. And now, rather than have had this grievous wrong to confess, she would gladly have lain down on

the forest-leaves, and died there, at Arthur Dimmesdale's feet.

"Oh, Arthur," cried she, "forgive me! In all things else I have striven to be true! Truth was the one virtue which I might have held fast, and did hold fast, through all extremity; save when thy good—thy life—thy fame—were put in question! Then I consented to a deception. But a lie is never good, even though death threaten on the other side! Dost thou not see what I would say? That old man!—the physician!—he whom they call Roger Chillingworth!—he was my husband!"

The minister looked at her, for an instant, with all that violence of passion, which—intermixed, in more shapes than one, with his higher, purer, softer qualities—was, in fact, the portion of him which the Devil claimed, and through which he sought to win the rest. Never was there a blacker or a fiercer frown than Hester now encountered. For the brief space that it lasted it was a dark transfiguration. But his character had been so much enfeebled by suffering that even its lower energies were incapable of more than a temporary struggle. He sank down on the ground, and buried his face in his hands.

"I might have known it," murmured he. "I did know it! Was not the secret told me, in the natural recoil of my heart, at the first sight of him, and as often as I have seen him since? Why did I not understand? Oh, Hester Prynne, thou little, little knowest all the horror of this thing! And, the shame!—the indelicacy!—the horrible ugliness of this exposure of a sick and guilty heart to the very eye that would gloat over it! Woman, woman, thou art accountable for this! I cannot forgive thee!"

"Thou shalt forgive me!" cried Hester, flinging herself on the fallen leaves beside him. "Let God punish! Thou shalt forgive!"

With sudden and desperate tenderness she threw her arms around him, and pressed his head against her bosom; little caring though his cheek rested on the scarlet letter. He would have released himself, but strove in vain to do so. Hester would not set him free, lest he should look her sternly in the face. All the world had frowned on her—for seven long years had it frowned upon this lonely woman—and still she bore it all, nor ever once turned away her firm, sad eyes. Heaven, likewise, had frowned upon her, and she had not died. But the frown of this pale, weak, sinful, and sorrow-stricken man was what Hester could not bear and live!

"Wilt thou yet forgive me?" she repeated, over and over again. "Wilt thou not frown? Wilt thou forgive?"

"I do forgive you, Hester," replied the minister, at length, with a deep utterance, out of an abyss of sadness, but no anger. "I freely forgive you now. May God forgive us both! We are not, Hester, the worst sinners in the world. There is one worse than even the polluted priest! That old man's revenge has been blacker than my sin. He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart. Thou and I, Hester, never did so!"

"Never, never!" whispered she. "What we did had a consecration of its own. We felt it so! We said so to each other! Has thou forgotten it?"

"Hush, Hester!" said Arthur Dimmesdale, rising from the ground. "No, I have not forgotten!"

They sat down again, side by side, and hand clasped in hand, on the mossy bank of the fallen tree. Life had never brought them a gloomier hour; it was the point whither their pathway had so long been tending, and darkening ever, as it stole along; and yet it enclosed a charm that made them linger upon it, and claim another, and another, and, after all, another moment. The forest was



obscure around them, and creaked with a blast that was passing through it. The boughs were tossing heavily above their heads; while one solemn old tree groaned dolefully to another, as if telling the sad story of the pair that sat beneath, or constrained to forebode evil to come.

And yet they lingered. How dreary looked the forest-track that led backward to the settlement, where Hester Prynne must take up again the burden of ignominy, and the minister the hollow mockery of his good name! So they lingered an instant longer. No golden light had ever been so precious as the gloom of this dark forest. Here, seen only by his eyes, the scarlet letter need not burn into the bosom of the fallen woman! Here, seen only by her eyes, Arthur Dimmesdale, false to God and man, might be, for one moment, true!

He started at a thought that suddenly occurred to him.

"Hester," cried he, "here is a new horror! Roger Chillingworth knows your purpose to reveal his true character. Will he continue, then, to keep our secret? What will now be the course of his revenge?"

"There is a strange secrecy in his nature," replied Hester, thoughtfully; "and it has grown upon him by the hidden practices of his revenge. I deem it not likely that he will betray the secret. He will doubtless seek other means of satiating his dark passion."

"And I!—how am I to live longer, breathing the same air with this deadly enemy?" exclaimed Arthur Dimmesdale, shrinking within himself, and pressing his hand nervously against his heart—a gesture that had grown involuntarily with him. "Think for me, Hester! Thou art strong. Resolve for me!"

"Thou must dwell no longer with this man," said Hester, slowly and firmly. "Thy heart must be no longer under his evil eye!"

"It were far worse than death!" replied the minister. "But how to avoid it? What choice remains to me? Shall I lie down on these withered leaves, where I cast myself when thou didst tell me what he was? Must I sink down there, and die at once?"

"Alas, what a ruin has befallen thee!" said Hester, with the tears gushing into her eyes. "Wilt thou die for very weakness? There is no other cause!"

"The judgment of God is on me," answered the conscience-stricken priest. "It is too mighty for me to struggle with!"

"Heaven would show mercy," rejoined Hester, "hadst thou but the strength to take advantage of it."

"Be thou strong for me!" answered he. "Advise me what to do."

"Is the world, then, so narrow?" exclaimed Hester Prynne, fixing her deep eyes on the minister's, and instinctively exercising a magnetic power over a spirit so shattered and subdued that it could hardly hold itself erect. "Doth the universe lie within the compass of yonder town, which only a little time ago was but a leaf-strewn desert, as lonely as this around us? Whither leads yonder forest-track? Backward to the settlement, thou sayest! Yes; but onward, too. Deeper it goes, and deeper, into the wilderness, less plainly to be seen at every step; until, some few miles hence, the yellow leaves will show no vestige of the white man's tread. There thou art free! So brief a journey would bring thee from a world where thou hast been most wretched, to one where thou mayst still be happy! Is there not shade enough in all this boundless forest to hide thy heart from the gaze of Roger Chillingworth?"

"Yes, Hester; but only under the fallen leaves!" replied the minister, with a sad smile.

"Then there is the broad pathway of the sea!" continued Hester. "It brought thee hither. If thou so choose, it will bear thee back again. In our native land, whether in some remote rural village or in vast London—or, surely in Germany, in France, in pleasant Italy—thou wouldst be beyond his power and knowledge! And what hast thou to do with all these iron men, and their opinions? They have kept thy better part in bondage too long already!"

"It cannot be!" answered the minister, listening as if he were called upon to realize a dream. "I am powerless to go! Wretched and sinful as I am, I have had no other thought than to drag on my earthly existence in the sphere where Providence hath placed me. Lost as my own soul is, I would still do what I may for other human souls! I dare not quit my post, though an unfaithful sentinel, whose sure reward is death and dishonor when his dreary watch shall come to an end!"

"Thou art crushed under this seven years' weight of misery," replied Hester, fervently resolved to buoy him up with her own energy. "But thou shalt leave it all behind thee! It shall not cumber thy steps, as thou treadest along the forest-path; neither shalt thou freight the ship with it, if thou prefer to cross the sea. Leave this wreck and ruin here where it hath happened. Meddle no more with it! Begin all anew! Hast thou exhausted possibility in the failure of this one trial? Not so! The future is yet full of trial and success. There is happiness to be enjoyed! There is good to be done! Exchange this false life of thine for a true one. Be, if thy spirit summon thee to such a mission, the teacher and apostle of the red men. Or—as is more thy nature—be a scholar and a sage among the wisest and the most renowned of the cultivated world. Preach! Write! Act! Do anything, save to lie

down and die! Give up this name of Arthur Dimmesdale, and make thyself another, and a high one, such as thou canst wear without fear or shame. Why shouldst thou tarry so much as one other day in the torments that have so gnawed into thy life!—that have made thee feeble to will and to do!—that will leave thee powerless even to repent! Up, and away!”

“Oh, Hester!” cried Arthur Dimmesdale, in whose eyes a fitful light, kindled by her enthusiasm, flashed up and died away, “thou tellest of running a race to a man whose knees are tottering beneath him! I must die here! There is not the strength or courage left me to venture into the wide, strange, difficult world, alone!”

It was the last expression of the despondency of a broken spirit. He lacked energy to grasp the better fortune that seemed within his reach.

He repeated the word.

“Alone, Hester!”

“Thou shalt not go alone!” answered she, in a deep whisper. Then, all was spoken!

## HENRY ESMOND MEETS BEATRIX<sup>1</sup>

*William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863)*

[Henry Esmond, returning from the wars, finds his cousin Beatrix grown to the marriageable age and falls in love with her. He is debarred, however, from declaring his passion, since he is supposed to belong to the illegitimate branch of the house of Castlewood.]

As they came up to the house at Walcote, the windows from within were lighted up with friendly welcome; the

<sup>1</sup> From *Henry Esmond*.

supper-table was spread in the oak-parlor; it seemed as if forgiveness and love were awaiting the returning prodigal. Two or three familiar faces of domestics were on the look-out at the porch—the old housekeeper was there, and young Lockwood from Castlewood in my Lord's livery of tawny and blue. His dear mistress pressed his arm as they passed into the hall. Her eyes beamed out on him with affection indescribable. "Welcome!" was all she said, as she looked up, putting back her fair curls and black hood. A sweet, rosy smile blushed on her face; Harry thought he had never seen her look so charming. Her face was lighted with a joy that was brighter than beauty—she took a hand of her son who was in the hall waiting his mother—she did not quit Esmond's arm.

"Welcome, Harry!" my young Lord echoed after her. "Here, we are all come to say so. Here's old Pincot; hasn't she grown handsome?" and Pincot, who was older and no handsomer than usual, made a curtsy to the Captain, as she called Esmond, and told my Lord to "Have done, now!"

"And here's Jack Lockwood. He'll make a famous grenadier, Jack; and so shall I; we'll both 'list under you, Cousin. As soon as I am seventeen, I go to the army—every gentleman goes to the army. Look who comes here!—ho, ho!" he burst into a laugh. "'Tis Mistress Trix, with a new riband; I knew she would put on one as soon as she heard a captain was coming to supper."

This laughing colloquy took place in the hall of Walcote House; in the midst of which is a staircase that leads from an open gallery, where are the doors of the sleeping chambers; and from one of these, a wax candle in her hand, and illuminating her, came Mistress Beatrix—the light falling indeed upon the scarlet riband which she wore, and upon the most brilliant white neck in the world.

Esmond had left a child and found a woman, grown beyond the common height, and arrived at such a dazzling completeness of beauty that his eyes might well show surprise and delight at beholding her. In hers there was a brightness so lustrous and melting that I have seen a whole assembly follow her as if by an attraction irresistible; and that night the great Duke was at the playhouse after Ramillies every soul turned and looked (she chanced to enter at the opposite side of the theatre at the same moment) at her, and not at him. She was a brown beauty; that is, her eyes, hair, and eyebrows and eyelashes were dark; her hair curling with rich undulations, and waving over her shoulders; but her complexion was as dazzling white as snow in sunshine, except her cheeks, which were a bright red, and her lips, which were of a still deeper crimson. Her mouth and chin, they said, were too large and full, and so they might be for a goddess in marble, but not for a woman whose eyes were fire, whose look was love, whose voice was the sweetest low song, whose shape was perfect symmetry, health, decision, activity; whose foot as it planted itself on the ground was firm but flexible, and whose motion, whether rapid or slow, was always perfect grace—agile as a nymph, lofty as a queen—now melting, now imperious, now sarcastic—there was no single movement of hers but was beautiful. As he thinks of her, he who writes feels young again, and remembers a paragon.

So she came, holding her dress with one fair rounded arm, and her taper before her, tripping down the stair to greet Esmond.

“She hath put on her scarlet stockings and white shoes,” says my Lord, still laughing. “Oh, my fine mistress! is this the way you set your cap at the Captain?” She approached, shining smiles upon Esmond, who could look at nothing but her eyes. She advanced, holding forward her

head as if she would have him kiss her as he used to do when she was a child.

"Stop," she said, "I am grown too big! Welcome, Cousin Harry!" And she made him an arch curtsy, sweeping down to the ground almost with the most gracious bend, looking up the while with the brightest eyes and sweetest smile. Love seemed to radiate from her. Harry eyed her with such a rapture as the first lover is described as having by Milton.

"N'est-ce pas?" says my Lady, in a low, sweet voice, still hanging on his arm.

Esmond turned round with a start and a blush, as he met his mistress's clear eyes. He had forgotten her, rapt in admiration of the *filia pulchrior*.

"Right foot forward, toe turned out, so! now drop the curtsy, and show the red stockings, Trix. They've silver clocks, Harry. The Dowager sent 'em. She went to put 'em on!" cries my Lord.

"Hush, you stupid child!" says Miss, smothering her brother with kisses; and then she must come and kiss her mamma, looking all the while at Harry over his mistress's shoulder. And if she did not kiss him, she gave him both her hands, and then took one of his in both hands, and said, "Oh Harry, we're so, so glad you're come!"

"There are woodcocks for supper," says my Lord. "Huzzay! It was such a hungry sermon."

"And it is the 29th of December; and our Harry has come home."

"Huzzay, old Pincot!" again says my Lord; and my dear lady's lips looked as if they were trembling with a prayer. She would have Harry lead in Beatrix to the supper-room, going herself with my young Lord Viscount; and to this party came Tom Tusher directly, whom four at least out of the company of five wished away. Away

he went, however, as soon as the sweetmeats were put down, and then, by the great crackling fire, his mistress, or Beatrix with her blushing graces, filling his glass for him, Harry told the story of his campaign, and passed the most delightful night his life had ever known. The sun was up long ere he was, so deep, sweet, and refreshing was his slumber. He woke as if angels had been watching at his bed all night. I dare say one that was as pure and loving as an angel had blessed his sleep with her prayers.

Next morning the chaplain read prayers to the little household at Walcote, as the custom was; Esmond thought Mistress Beatrix did not listen to Tusher's exhortation much; her eyes were wandering everywhere during the service, at least whenever he looked up he met them. Perhaps he also was not very attentive to his Reverence the Chaplain. "This might have been my life," he was thinking; "this might have been my duty from now till old age. Well, were it not a pleasant one to be with these dear friends and part from 'em no more? Until—until the destined lover comes and takes away pretty Beatrix"—And the best part of Tom Tusher's exposition, which may have been very learned and eloquent, was quite lost to poor Harry by this vision of the destined lover, who put the preacher out.

All the while of the prayers Beatrix knelt a little way before Harry Esmond. The red stockings were changed for a pair of gray, and black shoes, in which her feet looked to the full as pretty. All the roses of spring could not vie with the brightness of her complexion; Esmond thought he had never seen anything like the sunny lustre of her eyes. My Lady Viscountess looked fatigued, as if with watching, and her face was pale.

Miss Beatrix remarked these signs of indisposition in her mother and deplored them. "I am an old woman," says



my Lady, with a kind smile; "I cannot hope to look as young as you do, my dear."

"She'll never look as good as you do if she lives till she's a hundred," says my Lord, taking his mother by the waist, and kissing her hand.

"Do I look very wicked, Cousin?" says Beatrix, turning full round on Esmond, with her pretty face so close under his chin that the soft, perfumed hair touched it. She laid her finger-tips on his sleeve as she spoke; and he put his other hand over hers.

"I'm like your looking-glass," says he, "and that can't flatter you."

"He means that you are always looking at him, my dear," says her mother, archly. Beatrix ran away from Esmond at this, and flew to her mamma, whom she kissed, stopping my Lady's mouth with her pretty hand.

"And Harry is very good to look at," says my Lady, with her fond eyes regarding the young man.

"If 'tis good to see a happy face," says he, "you see that." My Lady said, "Amen," with a sigh; and Harry thought the memory of her dear lord rose up and rebuked her back again into sadness; for her face lost the smile, and resumed its look of melancholy.

"Why, Harry, how fine we look in our scarlet and silver, and our black periwig!" cries my Lord. "Mother, I am tired of my own hair. When shall I have a peruke? Where did you get your steenkirk, Harry?"

"It's some of my Lady Dowager's lace," says Harry; "she gave me this and a number of other fine things."

"My Lady Dowager isn't such a bad woman," my Lord continued.

"She's not so—so red as she's painted," says Miss Beatrix.

Her brother broke into a laugh. "I'll tell her you said so; by the Lord, Trix, I will!" he cries out.

"She'll know that you hadn't the wit to say it, my Lord," says Miss Beatrix.

"We won't quarrel the first day Harry's here, will we, mother?" said the young Lord. "We'll see if we can get on to the new year without a fight. Have some of this Christmas pie. And here comes the tankard; no, it's Pincot with the tea?"

"Will the Captain choose a dish?" asked Mistress Beatrix.

"I say, Harry," my Lord goes on, "I'll show thee my horses after breakfast; and we'll go a bird-netting to-night, and on Monday there's a cock-match at Winchester—do you love cock-fighting, Harry?—between the gentlemen of Sussex and the gentlemen of Hampshire, at ten pound the battle, and fifty pound the odd battle to show one-and-twenty cocks."

"And what will you do, Beatrix, to amuse our kinsman?" asks my Lady.

"I'll listen to him," says Beatrix. "I am sure he has a hundred things to tell us. And I'm jealous already of the Spanish ladies. Was that a beautiful nun at Cadiz that you rescued from the soldiers? Your man talked of it last night in the kitchen, and Mrs. Betty told me this morning as she combed my hair. And he says you must be in love, for you sat on deck all night, and scribbled verses all day in your table-book." Harry thought if he had wanted a subject for verses yesterday, to-day he had found one; and not all the Lindamiras and Ardelias of the poets were half so beautiful as this young creature; but he did not say so, though some one did for him.

This was his dear lady, who, after the meal was over, and the young people were gone, began talking of her children with Mr. Esmond, and of the characters of one and the other, and of her hopes and fears for both of them. "Tis

not while they are at home," she said, "and in their mother's nest, I fear for them—'tis when they are gone into the world, whither I shall not be able to follow them. Beatrix will begin her service next year. You may have heard a rumor about—about my Lord Blandford. They were both children; and it is but idle talk. I know my kinswoman would never let him make such a poor marriage as our Beatrix would be. There's scarce a princess in Europe that she thinks is good enough for him or for her ambition."

"There's not a princess in Europe to compare with her," says Emond.

"In beauty? No, perhaps not," answered my Lady. "She is most beautiful, isn't she? 'Tis not a mother's partiality that deceives me. I marked you yesterday when she came down the stair, and read it in your face. We look when you don't fancy us looking, and see better than you think, dear Harry; and just now, when they spoke about your poems—you writ pretty lines when you were but a boy—you thought Beatrix was a pretty subject for verse, did not you, Harry?" (The gentleman could only blush for a reply.) "And so she is—nor are you the first her pretty face has captivated. 'Tis quickly done. Such a pair of bright eyes as hers learn their power very soon, and use it very early." And, looking at him keenly with hers, the fair widow left him.

And so it is—a pair of bright eyes with a dozen glances suffice to subdue a man; to enslave him, and inflame him; to make him even forget; they dazzle him so that the past becomes straightway dim to him; and he so prizes them that he would give all his life to possess 'em. What is the fond love of dearest friends compared to this treasure? Is memory as strong as expectancy? fruition, as hunger? gratitude, as desire? I have looked at royal diamonds in the jewel-rooms in Europe, and thought how wars have

been made about 'em; Mogul sovereigns deposed and strangled for them, or ransomed with them; millions expended to buy them; and daring lives lost in digging out the little shining toys that I value no more than the button in my hat. And so there are other glittering baubles (of rare water too) for which men have been set to kill and quarrel ever since mankind began; and which last but for a score of years, when their sparkle is over. Where are those jewels now that beamed under Cleopatra's forehead, or shone in the sockets of Helen?

### DEATH OF THE CHILD-WIFE<sup>1</sup>

*Charles Dickens (1812-1870)*

[Dora, the exquisite child-wife, so spoken of because of her entire incapacity to attain mature thought and manners, dies.]

I must pause yet once again. Oh, my child-wife, there is a figure in the moving crowd before my memory, quiet and still, saying in its innocent love and childish beauty, Stop to think of me—turn to look upon the Little Blossom as it flutters to the ground!

I do. All else grows dim, and fades away. I am again with Dora, in our cottage. I do not know how long she has been ill. I am so used to it in feeling, that I cannot count the time. It is not really long, in weeks or months; but, in my usage and experience, it is a weary, weary while.

They have left off telling me to "wait a few days more." I have begun to fear, remotely, that the day may never shine when I shall see my child-wife running in the sunlight with her old friend Jip.

He is, as it were suddenly, grown very old. It may be

<sup>1</sup> From *David Copperfield*.

that he misses in his mistress something that enlivened him and made him younger; but he mopes, and his sight is weak, and his limbs are feeble, and my aunt is sorry that he objects to her no more, but creeps near her as he lies on Dora's bed—she sitting at the bedside—and mildly licks her hand.

Dora lies smiling on us, and is beautiful, and utters no hasty or complaining word. She says that we are very good to her; that her dear old careful boy is tiring himself out, she knows; that my aunt has no sleep, yet is always wakeful, active, and kind. Sometimes the little bird-like ladies come to see her; and then we talk about our wedding-day, and all that happy time.

What a strange rest and pause in my life there seems to be—and in all life, within doors and without—when I sit in the quiet, shaded, orderly room, with the blue eyes of my child-wife turned toward me, and her little fingers twining round my hand! Many and many an hour I sit thus; but, of all those times, three times come the freshest on my mind.

It is morning; and Dora, made so trim by my aunt's hands, shows me how her pretty hair *will* curl upon the pillow yet, and how long and bright it is, and how she likes to have it loosely gathered in that net she wears.

"Not that I am vain of it now, you mocking boy," she says, when I smile, "but because you used to say you thought it so beautiful; and because, when I first began to think about you, I used to peep in the glass, and wonder whether you would like very much to have a lock of it. Oh what a foolish fellow you were, Doady, when I gave you one!"

"That was on the day when you were painting the flow-

ers I had given you, Dora, and when I told you how much in love I was."

"Ah! but I didn't like to tell *you*," says Dora, "*then*, how I had cried over them, because I believed you really liked me! When I can run about again as I used to do, Doady, let us go and see those places where we were such a silly couple, shall we? And take some of the old walks? And not forget poor papa?"

"Yes, we will, and have some happy days. So you must make haste to get well, my dear."

"Oh, I shall soon do that! I am so much better, you don't know!"

It is evening; and I sit in the same chair, by the same bed, with the same face turned toward me. We have been silent, and there is a smile upon her face. I have ceased to carry my light burden up and down stairs now. She lies here all the day.

"Doady!"

"My dear Dora!"

"You won't think what I am going to say unreasonable, after what you told me such a little while ago, of Mr. Wickfield's not being well? I want to see Agnes. Very much I want to see her."

"I will write to her, my dear."

"Will you?"

"Directly."

"What a good, kind boy! Doady, take me on your arm. Indeed, my dear, it's not a whim. It's not a foolish fancy. I want, very much indeed, to see her!"

"I am certain of it. I have only to tell her so, and she is sure to come."

"You are very lonely when you go down-stairs, now?" Dora whispers, with her arm about my neck.

"How can I be otherwise, my own love, when I see your empty chair?"

"My empty chair!" She clings to me for a little while in silence. "And you really miss me, Doady?" looking up, and brightly smiling. "Even poor, giddy, stupid me?"

"My heart, who is there upon earth that I could miss so much?"

"Oh, husband! I am so glad, yet so sorry!" creeping closer to me, and folding me in both her arms. She laughs and sobs, and then is quiet, and quite happy.

"Quite!" she says. "Only give Agnes my dear love, and tell her that I want very, very much to see her; and I have nothing left to wish for."

"Except to get well again, Dora."

"Ah, Doady! Sometimes I think—you know I always was a silly little thing!—that that will never be!"

"Don't say so, Dora! Dearest love, don't think so!"

"I won't, if I can help it, Doady. But I am very happy; though my dear boy is so lonely by himself, before his child-wife's empty chair!"

It is night; and I am, with her still. Agnes has arrived; has been among us for a whole day and an evening. She, my aunt, and I, have sat with Dora since the morning, all together. We have not talked much, but Dora has been perfectly contented and cheerful. We are now alone.

Do I know, now, that my child-wife will soon leave me? They have told me so; they have told me nothing new to my thoughts; but I am far from sure that I have taken that truth to heart. I cannot master it. I have withdrawn by myself, many times to-day, to weep. I have remembered Who wept for a parting between the living

and the dead. I have bethought me of all that gracious and compassionate history. I have tried to resign myself, and to console myself; and that, I hope, I may have done imperfectly; but what I cannot firmly settle in my mind is, that the end will absolutely come. I hold her hand in mine, I hold her heart in mine, I see her love for me, alive in all its strength. I cannot shut out a pale, lingering shadow of belief that she will be spared.

"I am going to speak to you, Doady. I am going to say something I have often thought of saying lately. You won't mind?" with a gentle look.

"Mind, my darling?"

"Because I don't know what you will think, or what you may have thought sometimes. Perhaps you have often thought the same. Doady, dear, I am afraid I was too young."

I lay my face upon the pillow by her, and she looks into my eyes, and speaks very softly. Gradually, as she goes on, I feel, with a stricken heart, that she is speaking of herself as past.

"I am afraid, dear, I was too young. I don't mean in years only, but in experience, and thoughts, and everything. I was such a silly little creature! I am afraid it would have been better if we had only loved each other as a boy and girl, and forgotten it. I have begun to think I was not fit to be a wife."

I try to stay my tears, and to reply, "Oh, Dora, love, as fit as I to be a husband!"

"I don't know," with the old shake of her curls. "Perhaps! But if I had been more fit to be married, I might have made you more so too. Besides, you are very clever, and I never was."

"We have been very happy, my sweet Dora."

"I was very happy, very. But, as years went on, my



dear boy would have wearied of his child-wife. She would have been less and less a companion for him. He would have been more and more sensible of what was wanting in his home. She wouldn't have improved. It is better as it is."

"Oh, Dora, dearest, dearest, do not speak to me so. Every word seems a reproach!"

"No, not a syllable!" she answers, kissing me. "Oh, my dear, you never deserved it, and I loved you far too well to say a reproachful word to you in earnest—it was all the merit I had, except being pretty—or you thought me so. Is it lonely down-stairs, Doady?"

"Very—very!"

"Don't cry! Is my chair there?"

"In its old place."

"Oh, how my poor boy cries! Hush, hush! Now, make me one promise. I want to speak to Agnes. When you go down-stairs, tell Agnes so, and send her up to me; and while I speak to her, let no one come—not even aunt. I want to speak to Agnes by herself. I want to speak to Agnes quite alone."

I promise that she shall, immediately; but I cannot leave her, for my grief.

"I said that it was better as it is!" she whispers, as she holds me in her arms. "Oh, Doady, after more years, you never could have loved your child-wife better than you do; and, after more years, she would so have tried and disappointed you, that you might not have been able to love her half so well! I know I was too young and foolish. It is much better as it is!"

Agnes is down-stairs when I go into the parlor, and I give her the message. She disappears, leaving me alone with Jip.

His Chinese house is by the fire, and he lies within it, on his bed of flannel, querulously trying to sleep. The bright moon is high and clear. As I look out on the night, my tears fall fast, and my undisciplined heart is chastened heavily—heavily.

I sit down by the fire, thinking with a blind remorse of all those secret feelings I have nourished since my marriage. I think of every little trifle between me and Dora, and feel the truth, that trifles make the sum of life. Ever rising from the sea of my remembrance is the image of the dear child as I knew her first, graced by my young love, and by her own, with every fascination wherein such love is rich. Would it, indeed, have been better if we had loved each other as a boy and girl, and forgotten it? Undisciplined heart, reply!

How the time wears, I know not; until I am recalled by my child-wife's old companion. More restless than he was, he crawls out of his house, and looks at me, and wanders to the door, and whines to go upstairs.

"Not to-night, Jip! Not to-night!"

He comes very slowly back to me, licks my hand, and lifts his dim eyes to my face.

"Oh, Jip! It may be, never again!"

He lies down at my feet, stretches himself out as if to sleep, and, with a plaintive cry, is dead.

"Oh, Agnes! Look, look, here!"

That face, so full of pity and of grief, that rain of tears, that awful mute appeal to me, that solemn hand up-raised toward Heaven!

"Agnes?"

It is over. Darkness comes before my eyes; and for a time all things are blotted out of my remembrance.

THE PRINCESS CLÆLIA MAKES LOVE TO GERARD<sup>1</sup>

*Charles Reade (1814–1884)*

[Gerard, engaged to give the Princess lessons in drawing, has unwittingly attracted her love. He is already the husband of Margaret Brandt, whom he has left in Holland.]

He almost ran to the Princess Clælia.

He was ushered into an apartment new to him. It was not very large, but most luxurious; a fountain played in the centre, and the floor was covered with the skins of panthers, dressed with the hair, so that no footfall could be heard. The room was an antechamber to the princess's boudoir, for on one side there was no door, but an ample curtain of gorgeous tapestry.

Here Gerard was left alone till he became quite uneasy, and doubted whether the maid had not shown him to the wrong place.

These doubts were agreeably dissipated.

A light step came swiftly behind the curtain; it parted in the middle, and there stood a figure the heathens might have worshipped. It was not quite Venus, nor quite Minerva; but between the two; nobler than Venus, more womanly than Jupiter's daughter. Toga, tunic, sandals; nothing was modern. And as for beauty, that is of all times.

Gerard started up, and all the artist in him flushed with pleasure.

"Oh!" he cried, innocently, and gazed in rapture.

This added the last charm to his model; a light blush tinted her cheeks, and her eyes brightened, and her mouth

<sup>1</sup> From *The Cloister and the Hearth*.

smiled with delicious complacency at this genuine tribute to her charms.

When they had looked at one another so some time, and she saw Gerard's eloquence was confined to ejaculating and gazing, she spoke. "Well, Gerardo, thou seest I have made myself an antique monster for thee."

"A monster? I doubt Fra Colonna would fall down and adore your highness, seeing you so habited."

"Nay, I care not to be adored by an old man. I would liever be loved by a young one—of my own choosing."

Gerard took out his pencils, arranged his canvas, which he had covered with stout paper, and set to work; and so absorbed was he that he had no mercy on his model. At last, after near an hour in one posture, "Gerardo," said she, faintly, "I can stand so no more, even for thee."

"Sit down and rest awhile, signora."

"I thank thee," said she; and, sinking into a chair, turned pale and sighed.

Gerard was alarmed, and saw also he had been inconsiderate. He took water from the fountain and was about to throw it in her face, but she put up a white hand deprecatingly: "Nay, hold it to my brow with thine hand; prithee, do not fling it at me!"

Gerard timidly and hesitating applied his wet hand to her brow.

"Ah!" she sighed, "that is reviving. Again!"

He applied it again. She thanked him, and asked him to ring a little hand-bell on the table. He did so, and a maid came, and was sent to Floretta with orders to bring a large fan.

Floretta speedily came with the fan.

She no sooner came near the princess than that lady's high-bred nostrils suddenly expanded like a blood-horse's. "Wretch!" said she; and, rising up with a sudden return

to vigor, seized Floretta with her left hand, twisted it in her hair, and with the right hand boxed her ears severely three times.

Floretta screamed and blubbered, but obtained no mercy.

The antique toga left quite disengaged a bare arm, that now seemed as powerful as it was beautiful; it rose and fell like the piston of a modern steam-engine, and heavy slaps resounded one after another on Floretta's shoulders; the last one drove her sobbing and screaming through the curtain, and there she was heard crying bitterly for some time after.

"Saints of heaven!" cried Gerard, "what is amiss? What hath she done?"

"She knows right well 'Tis not the first time. The nasty toad! I'll learn her to come to me stinking of the musk-cat."

"Alas! signora, 'twas a small fault, methinks."

"A small fault? Nay, 'twas a foul fault." She added, with an amazing sudden descent to humility and sweetness: "Are you wroth with me for beating her, Gerardo?"

"Signora, it ill becomes me to school you; but methinks such as Heaven appoints to govern others should govern themselves."

"That is true, Gerardo. How wise you are, to be so young." She then called the other maid, and gave her a little purse. "Take that to Floretta, and tell her 'the Gerardo' hath interceded for her; and so I must needs forgive her. There, Gerardo."

Gerardo colored all over at the compliment; but, not knowing how to turn a phrase equal to the occasion, asked her if he should resume her picture.

"Not yet; beating that hussy hath somewhat breathed me. I'll sit awhile, and you shall talk to me. I know you can talk, an it pleases you, as rarely as you draw."

"That were easily done."

"Do it then, Gerardo."

Gerard was taken aback.

"But, signora, I know not what to say. This is sudden."

"Say your real mind. Say you wish you were anywhere but here."

"Nay, signora, that would not be sooth. I wish one thing, though."

"Ay, and what is that?" said she, gently.

"I wish I could have drawn you as you were beating that poor lass. You were awful, yet lovely. Oh, what a subject for a Pythoness!"

"Alas! he thinks but of his art. And why keep such a coil about my beauty, Gerardo? You are far fairer than I am. You are more like Apollo than I to Venus. Also, you have lovely hair, and lovely eyes—but you know not what to do with them."

"Ay, do I. To draw you, signora."

"Ah, yes; you can see my features with them; but you cannot see what any Roman gallant had seen long ago in your place. Yet sure you must have noted how welcome you are to me, Gerardo?"

"I can see your highness is always passing kind to me; a poor stranger like me."

"No, I am not, Gerardo. I have often been cold to you; rude sometimes; and you are so simple you see not the cause. Alas! I feared for my own heart. I feared to be your slave. I who have hitherto made slaves. Ah! Gerardo, I am unhappy. Ever since you came here I have lived upon your visits. The day you are to come I am bright. The other days I am listless, and wish them fled. You are not like the Roman gallants. You make me hate them. You are ten times braver to my eye; and you are

wise and scholarly, and never flatter and lie. I scorn a man that lies. Gerar-do, teach me thy magic; teach me to make thee as happy by my side as I am still by thine."

As she poured out these strange words, the princess's mellow voice sunk almost to a whisper, and trembled with half-suppressed passion, and her white hand stole timidly yet earnestly down Gerard's arm, till it rested like a soft bird upon his wrist, and as ready to fly away at a word.

Destitute of vanity and experience, wrapped up in his Margaret and his art, Gerard had not seen this revelation coming, though it had come by regular and visible gradations.

He blushed all over. His innocent admiration of the regal beauty that besieged him did not for a moment displace the absent Margaret's image. Yet it was regal beauty, and wooing with a grace and tenderness he had never even figured in imagination. How to check her without wounding her?

He blushed and trembled.

The siren saw, and encouraged him. "Poor Gerardo," she murmured, "fear not; none shall ever harm thee under my wing. Wilt not speak to me, Gerar-do mio?"

"Signora!" muttered Gerard, deprecatingly.

At this moment his eye, lowered in his confusion, fell on the shapely white arm and delicate hand that curled round his elbow like a tender vine, and it flashed across him how he had just seen that lovely limb employed on Floretta.

He trembled and blushed.

"Alas!" said the princess, "I scare him. Am I then so very terrible? Is it my Roman robe? I'll doff it, and habit me as when thou first camest to me. Mindest thou? 'Twas to write a letter to yon barren knight Ercole d'Orsini. Shall I tell thee? 'Twas the sight of thee, and thy pretty ways, and thy wise words, made me hate him on the in-

stant. I liked the fool well enough before, or wist I liked him. Tell me now how many times hast thou been here since then. Ah! thou knowest not; lovest me not, I doubt, as I love thee. Eighteen times, Gerardo. And each time dearer to me. The day thou comest not 'tis night, not day, to Clælia. Alas! I speak for both. Cruel boy, am I not worth a word? Hast every day a princess at thy feet? Nay, prithee, prithee, speak to me, Gerar-do."

"Signora," faltered Gerard, "what can I say, that were not better left unsaid? Oh, evil day that ever I came here."

"Ah, say not so. 'Twas the brightest day ever shone on me; or indeed on thee. I'll make thee confess so much ere long, ungrateful one."

"Your highness," began Gerard, in a low, pleading voice.

"Call me Clælia, Gerar-do."

"Signora, I am too young and too little wise to know how I ought to speak to you, so as not to seem blind nor yet ungrateful. But this I know, I were both naught and ungrateful, and the worst foe e'er you had, did I take advantage of this mad fancy. Sure some ill spirit hath had leave to afflict you withal. For 'tis all unnatural that a princess adorned with every grace should abase her affections on a churl."

The princess withdrew her hand slowly from Gerard's wrist.

Yet as it passed lightly over his arm it seemed to linger a moment at parting.

"You fear the daggers of my kinsmen," said she, half sadly, half contemptuously.

"No more than I fear the bodkins of your women," said Gerard, haughtily. "But I fear God and the saints, and my own conscience."



"The truth, Gerardo, the truth! Hypocrisy sits awkwardly on thee. Princesses, while they are young, are not despised for love of God, but of some other woman. Tell me whom thou lovest; and, if she is worthy thee, I will forgive thee."

"No, she is not in Italy, upon my soul."

"Ah! there is one somewhere, then. Where, where?"

"In Holland, my native country."

"Ah! Marie de Bourgogne is fair, they say. Yet she is but a child."

"Princess, she I love is not noble. She is as I am. Nor is she so fair as thou. Yet is she fair; and linked to my heart forever by her virtues, and by all the dangers and griefs we have borne together, and for one another. Forgive me; but I would not wrong my Margaret for all the highest dames in Italy."

The slighted beauty started to her feet, and stood opposite him, as beautiful but far more terrible than when she slapped Floretta, for then her cheeks were red, but now they were pale, and her eyes full of concentrated fury.

"This to my face, unmannered wretch?" she cried. "Was I born to be insulted, as well as scorned, by such as thou? Beware! We nobles brook no rivals. Bethink thee whether is better, the love of a Cesarini, or her hate; for, after all I have said and done to thee, it must be love or hate between us, and to the death. Choose now!"

He looked up at her with wonder and awe, as she stood towering over him in her Roman toga, offering this strange alternative.

He seemed to have affronted a goddess of antiquity; he a poor puny mortal.

He sighed deeply, but spoke not.

Perhaps something in his deep and patient sigh touched a tender chord in that ungoverned creature; or perhaps

the time had come for one passion to ebb and another to flow. The princess sank languidly into a seat, and the tears began to steal rapidly down her cheeks.

"Alas! alas!" said Gerard. "Weep not, sweet lady; your tears they do accuse me, and I am like to weep for company. My kind patron, be yourself! You will live to see how much better a friend I was to you than I seemed."

"I see it now, Gerardo," said the princess. "Friend is the word—the only word can ever pass between us twain. I was mad. Any other man had ta'en advantage of my folly. You must teach me to be your friend and nothing more."

#### HOW ROCHESTER PROPOSED TO JANE EYRE<sup>1</sup>

*Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855)*

[Jane Eyre has taken a situation with Mr. Rochester at Thornfield as governess to his ward, Adèle. It is rumored that he is about to marry Blanche Ingram.]

Sweet briar and southernwood, jasmine, pink, and rose, have long been yielding their evening sacrifice of incense; this new scent is neither of shrub nor flower; it is—I know it well—it is Mr. Rochester's cigar. I look round, and I listen. I see trees laden with ripening fruit. I hear a nightingale warbling in a wood half a mile off; no moving form is visible, no coming step audible; but that perfume increases; I must flee. I make for the wicket leading to the shrubbery, and I see Mr. Rochester entering. I step aside into the ivy recess; he will not stay long; he will soon return whence he came, and if I sit still he will never see me.

But no—eventide is as pleasant to him as to me, and this antique garden as attractive; and he strolls on, now lifting the gooseberry-tree branches to look at the fruit, large as plums, with which they are laden; now taking a ripe cherry from the wall; now stooping toward a knot of flowers, either to inhale their fragrance or to admire the dew-beads on their petals. A great moth goes humming by me; it alights on a plant at Mr. Rochester's foot; he sees it, and bends to examine it.

"Now he has his back toward me," thought I, "and he is occupied too; perhaps, if I walk softly, I can slip away unnoticed."

I trod on an edging of turf that the crackle of the pebbly gravel might not betray me; he was standing among the beds at a yard or two distant from where I had to pass; the moth apparently engaged him. "I shall get by very well," I meditated. As I crossed his shadow, thrown long over the garden by the moon, not yet risen high, he said, quietly, without turning: "Jane, come and look at this fellow."

I had made no noise; he had not eyes behind—could his shadow feel? I started at first, and then I approached him.

"Look at his wings," said he; "he reminds me rather of a West Indian insect; one does not often see so large and gay a night-rover in England; there! he is flown."

The moth roamed away. I was sheepishly retreating also; but Mr. Rochester followed me, and when we reached the wicket, he said: "Turn back; on so lovely a night it is a shame to sit in the house; and surely no one can wish to go to bed while sunset is thus at meeting with moon-rise."

It is one of my faults that, though my tongue is sometimes prompt enough at an answer, there are times when

it sadly fails me in framing an excuse; and always the lapse occurs at some crisis, when a facile word or plausible pretext is specially wanted to get me out of painful embarrassment. I did not like to walk at this hour alone with Mr. Rochester in the shadowy orchard; but I could not find a reason to allege for leaving him. I followed with lagging step, and thoughts busily bent on discovering a means of extrication; but he himself looked so composed, and so grave also, I became ashamed of feeling any confusion; the evil—if evil existent or prospective there was—seemed to lie with me only; his mind was unconscious and quiet.

"Jane," he recommenced, as we entered the laurel walk, and slowly strayed down in the direction of the sunk fence and the horse-chestnut, "Thornfield is a pleasant place in summer, is it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"You must have become in some degree attached to the house—you, who have an eye for natural beauties, and a good deal of the organ of adhesiveness?"

"I am attached to it, indeed."

"And though I don't comprehend how it is, I perceive you have acquired a degree of regard for that foolish little child, Adèle, too; and even for simple dame Fairfax."

"Yes, sir; in different ways, I have an affection for both."

"And would be sorry to part with them?"

"Yes."

"Pity!" he said, and sighed and paused. "It is always the way of events in this life," he continued, presently; "no sooner have you got settled in a pleasant resting-place than a voice calls out to you to rise and move on, for the hour of repose is expired."

"Must I move on, sir?" I asked. "Must I leave Thornfield?"

"I believe you must, Jane. I am sorry, Janet, but I believe indeed you must."

This was a blow; but I did not let it prostrate me.

"Well, sir, I shall be ready when the order to march comes."

"It is come now—I must give it to-night."

"Then you are going to be married, sir?"

"Ex-act-ly—pre-cise-ly; with your usual acuteness, you have hit the nail straight on the head."

"Soon, sir?"

"Very soon, my—that is, Miss Eyre; and you'll remember, Jane, the first time I, or Rumor, plainly intimated to you that it was my intention to put my old bachelor's neck into the sacred noose, to enter into the holy estate of matrimony—to take Miss Ingram to my bosom, in short (she's an extensive armful; but that's not to the point—one can't have too much of such a very excellent thing as my beautiful Blanche); well, as I was saying—listen to me, Jane! You're not turning your head to look after more moths, are you? That was only a lady-clock, child, 'flying away home.' I wish to remind you that it was you who first said to me, with that discretion I respect in you—with that foresight, prudence, and humility which befit your responsible and dependent position—that in case I married Miss Ingram—both you and little Adèle had better trot forthwith. I pass over the sort of slur conveyed in this suggestion on the character of my beloved; indeed, when you are far away, Janet, I'll try to forget it; I shall notice only its wisdom, which is such that I have made it my law of action. Adèle must go to school; and you, Miss Eyre, must get a new situation."

"Yes, sir, I will advertise immediately; and meantime, I suppose—" I was going to say, "I suppose I may stay here till I find another shelter to betake myself to"; but

I stopped, feeling it would not do to risk a long sentence, for my voice was not quite under command.

"In about a month I hope to be a bridegroom," continued Mr. Rochester; "and in the interim I shall myself look out for employment and an asylum for you."

"Thank you, sir; I am sorry to give—"

"Oh, no need to apologize! I consider that when a dependent does her duty as well as you have done yours she has a sort of claim upon her employer for any little assistance he can conveniently render her; indeed I have already, through my future mother-in-law, heard of a place that *I* think will suit; it is to undertake the education of the five daughters of Mrs. Dionysius O'Gall, of Bitternutt Lodge, Connaught, Ireland. You'll like Ireland, I think; they're such warm-hearted people there, they say."

"It is a long way off, sir."

"No matter—a girl of your sense will not object to the voyage or the distance."

"Not the voyage, but the distance; and then the sea is a barrier—"

"From what, Jane?"

"From England and from Thornfield; and—"

"Well?"

"From *you*, sir."

I said this almost involuntarily; and, with as little sanction of free will, my tears gushed out. I did not cry so as to be heard, however; I avoided sobbing. The thought of Mrs. O'Gall and Bitternutt Lodge struck cold to my heart; and colder the thought of all the brine and foam, destined, as it seemed, to rush between me and the master at whose side I now walked! and coldest the remembrance of the wider ocean—wealth, caste, custom intervened between me and what I naturally and inevitably loved.

"It is a long way," I again said.

"It is, to be sure; and when you get to Bitternutt Lodge, Connaught, Ireland, I shall never see you again, Jane; that's morally certain. I never go over to Ireland, not having myself much of a fancy for the country. We have been good friends, Jane; have we not?"

"Yes, sir."

"And when friends are on the eve of separation they like to spend the little time that remains to them close to each other. Come—we'll talk over the voyage and the parting quietly, half an hour or so, while the stars enter their shining life up in heaven yonder; here is the chestnut-tree; here is the bench at its old roots. Come, we will sit there in peace to-night, though we should never more be destined to sit there together." He seated me and himself.

"It is a long way to Ireland, Janet, and I am sorry to send my little friend on such weary travels; but if I can't do better, how is it to be helped? Are you anything akin to me, do you think, Jane?"

I could risk no sort of answer by this time; my heart was full.

"Because," he said, "I sometimes have a queer feeling with regard to you—especially when you are near me, as now; it is as if I had a string somewhere under my left ribs, tightly and inextricably knotted to a similar string situated in the corresponding quarter of your little frame. And if that boisterous channel, and two hundred miles or so of land, come broad between us, I am afraid that cord of communion will be snapped; and then I've a nervous notion I should take to bleeding inwardly. As for you—you'd forget me."

"That I *never* should, sir; you know—" Impossible to proceed.

"Jane, do you hear that nightingale singing in the wood? Listen!"

In listening, I sobbed convulsively; for I could repress what I endured no longer; I was obliged to yield, and I was shaken from head to foot with acute distress. When I did speak, it was only to express an impetuous wish that I had never been born, or never come to Thornfield.

"Because you are sorry to leave it?"

The vehemence of emotion, stirred by grief and love within me, was claiming mastery, and struggling for full sway, and asserting a right to predominate, to overcome, to live, rise, and reign at last; yes—and to speak.

"I grieve to leave Thornfield; I love Thornfield—I love it, because I have lived in it a full and delightful life—momentarily at least. I have not been trampled on. I have not been petrified. I have not been buried with inferior minds, and excluded from every glimpse of communion with what is bright and energetic and high. I have talked, face to face, with what I reverence; with what I delight in—with an original, a vigorous, an expanded mind. I have known you, Mr. Rochester, and it strikes me with terror and anguish to feel I absolutely must be torn from you forever. I see the necessity of departure; and it is like looking on the necessity of death."

"Where do you see the necessity?" he asked, suddenly.

"Where? You, sir, have placed it before me."

"In what shape?"

"In the shape of Miss Ingram; a noble and beautiful woman—your bride."

"My bride! What bride? I have no bride!"

"But you will have."

"Yes—I will!—I will!" He set his teeth.

"Then I must go—you have said it yourself."



"No; you must stay! I swear it—and the oath shall be kept."

"I tell you I must go!" I retorted, roused to something like passion. "Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton—a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! I have as much soul as you—and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh—it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal—as we are!"

"As we are!" repeated Mr. Rochester—"so," he added, enclosing me in his arms, gathering me to his breast, pressing his lips on my lips; "so, Jane!"

"Yes, so, sir," I rejoined; "and yet not so; for you are a married man—or as good as a married man, and wed to one inferior to you—to one with whom you have no sympathy—whom I do not believe you truly love; for I have seen and heard you sneer at her. I would scorn such a union; therefore, I am better than you—let me go!"

"Where, Jane? To Ireland?"

"Yes—to Ireland. I have spoken my mind, and can go anywhere now."

"Jane, be still; don't struggle so, like a wild, frantic bird that is rending its own plumage in its desperation."

"I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with an independent will, which I now exert to leave you."

Another effort set me at liberty, and I stood erect before him.

"And your will shall decide your destiny," he said; "I offer you my hand, my heart, and a share of all my possessions."

"You play a farce, which I merely laugh at."

"I ask you to pass through life at my side—to be my second self, and best earthly companion."

"For that fate you have already made your choice, and must abide by it."

"Jane, be still a few moments; you are overexcited; I will be still too."

A waft of wind came sweeping down the laurel walk, and trembled through the boughs of the chestnut; it wandered away—away—to an indefinite distance—it died. The nightingale's song was then the only voice of the hour; in listening to it, I again wept. Mr. Rochester sat quiet, looking at me gently and seriously. Some time passed before he spoke; he at last said: "Come to my side, Jane, and let us explain and understand one another."

"I will never again come to your side; I am torn away now, and cannot return."

"But, Jane, I summon you as my wife; it is you only I intend to marry."

### FOREST LOVE<sup>1</sup>

*Charles Kingsley (1819–1875)*

[Amyas Leigh, an English adventurer on the Spanish Main, has travelled inland up a great river till he has come to an Indian village, the girl-queen of which, Ayacanora, has fallen in love with him. Fearing that the temptation of her beauty

<sup>1</sup> From *Westward Ho!*

may persuade him to stay, he orders his men to march forward. On gathering his company, he finds that two are missing, Ebsworthy and Will Parracombe. He suspects that they have succumbed to his temptation and escaped into the forest with Indian maids. He sets out to trace them, and Ayacanora accompanies him as a guide.]

So forth Amyas went, with Ayacanora as a guide, some five miles upward along the forest slopes, till the girl whispered, "There they are"; and Amyas, pushing himself gently through a thicket of bamboo, beheld a scene which, in spite of his wrath, kept him silent, and perhaps softened, for a minute.

On the farther side of a little lawn the stream leapt through a chasm beneath overarching vines, sprinkling eternal freshness upon all around, and then sank foaming into a clear rock-basin, a bath for Dian's self. On its farther side the crag rose some twenty feet in height, bank upon bank of feathered ferns and cushioned moss, over the rich green beds of which drooped a thousand orchids, scarlet, white, and orange, and made the still pool gorgeous with the reflection of their gorgeousness. At its more quiet outfall it was half-hidden in huge fantastic leaves and tall flowering stems; but near the waterfall the grassy bank sloped down toward the stream, and there, on palm-leaves strewed upon the turf, beneath the shadow of the crags, lay the two men whom Amyas sought, and whom, now he had found them, he had hardly heart to wake from their delicious dream.

For what a nest it was which they had found! The air was heavy with the scent of flowers, and quivering with the murmur of the stream, the humming of the colibris and insects, the cheerful song of birds, the gentle cooing of a hundred doves; while now and then, from far away, the musical wail of the sloth, or the deep toll of the bell-bird,

came softly to the ear. What was not there which eye or ear could need? And what which palate could need either? For on the rock above, some strange tree, leaning forward, dropped every now and then a luscious apple upon the grass below, and huge wild plantains bent beneath their load of fruit.

There, on the stream bank, lay the two renegades from civilized life. They had cast away their clothes, and painted themselves, like the Indians, with arnotto and indigo. One lay lazily picking up the fruit which fell close to his side; the other sat, his back against a cushion of soft moss, his hands folded languidly upon his lap, giving himself up to the soft influence of the narcotic coca-juice, with half-shut, dreamy eyes fixed on the everlasting sparkle of the waterfall:

“While beauty, born of murmuring sound,  
Did pass into his face.”

Somewhat apart crouched their two dusky brides, crowned with fragrant flowers, but working busily, like true women, for the lords whom they delighted to honor. One sat plaiting palm fibres into a basket; the other was boring the stem of a huge milk-tree, which rose like some mighty column on the right hand of the lawn, its broad canopy of leaves unseen through the dense underwood of laurel and bamboo, and betokened only by the rustle far aloft, and by the mellow shade in which it bathed the whole delicious scene.

Amyas stood silent for a while, partly from noble shame at seeing two Christian men thus fallen of their own self-will; partly because—and he could not but confess that—a solemn calm brooded above that glorious place, to break through which seemed sacrilege even while he felt it a duty. Such, he thought, was Paradise of old; such

our first parents' bridal bower! Ah! if man had not fallen, he too might have dwelt forever in such a home—with whom? He started, and shaking off the spell, advanced sword in hand.

The women saw him and, springing to their feet, caught up their long pocumas, and leapt like deer each in front of her beloved. There they stood, the deadly tubes pressed to their lips, eying him like tigresses who protect their young, while every slender limb quivered, not with terror, but with rage.

Amyas paused, half in admiration, half in prudence; for one rash step was death. But rushing through the canes, Ayacanora sprang to the front, and shrieked to them in Indian. At the sight of the prophetess the women wavered, and Amyas, putting on as gentle a face as he could, stepped forward, assuring them in his best Indian that he would harm no one.

"Ebsworthy! Parracombe! Are you grown such savages already that you have forgotten your captain? Stand up, men, and salute!"

Ebsworthy sprang to his feet, obeyed mechanically, and then slipped behind his bride again, as if in shame. The dreamer turned his head languidly, raised his hand to his forehead, and then returned to his contemplation.

Amyas rested the point of his sword on the ground, and his hands upon the hilt, and looked sadly and solemnly upon the pair. Ebsworthy broke the silence, half reproachfully, half trying to bluster away the coming storm.

"Well, noble captain, so you've hunted out us poor fellows; and want to drag us back again in a halter, I suppose?"

"I came to look for Christians, and I find heathens; for men, and I find swine. I shall leave the heathens to their wilderness, and the swine to their trough. Parracombe!"

"He's too happy to answer you, sir. And why not? What do you want of us? Our two years' vow is out, and we are free men now."

"Free to become like the beasts that perish? You are the queen's servants still, and in her name I charge you—"

"Free to be happy," interrupted the man. "With the best of wives, the best of food, a warmer bed than a duke's and a finer garden than an emperor's. As for clothes, why the plague should a man wear them where he don't need them? As for gold, what's the use of it where Heaven sends everything ready-made to your hands? Harken! Captain Leigh. You've been a good captain to me, and I'll repay you with a bit of sound advice. Give up your gold-hunting, and toiling and moiling after honor and glory, and copy us. Take that fair maid behind you there to wife; pitch here with us; and see if you are not happier in one day than ever you were in all your life before."

"You are drunk, sirrah! William Parracombe! Will you speak to me, or shall I heave you into the stream to sober you?"

"Who calls William Parracombe?" answered a sleepy voice.

"I, fool!—your captain."

"I am not William Parracombe. He is dead long ago of hunger, and labor, and heavy sorrow, and will never see Bideford town any more. He is turned into an Indian now; and he is to sleep, sleep, sleep for a hundred years, till he gets his strength again, poor fellow—"

"Awake, then, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light! A christened Englishman, and living thus the life of a beast!"

"Christ shall give thee light?" answered the same un-

natural, abstracted voice. "Yes; so the parsons say. And they say too, that He is Lord of Heaven and earth. I should have thought His light was as near us here as anywhere, and nearer too, by the look of the place. Look round!" said he, waving a lazy hand, "and see the works of God, and the place of Paradise, whither poor, weary souls go home and rest, after their masters in the wicked world have used them up, with labor and sorrow, and made them wade knee-deep in blood. I'm tired of blood, and tired of gold. I'll march no more; I'll fight no more; I'll hunger no more after vanity and vexation of spirit. What shall I get by it? Maybe I shall leave my bones in the wilderness. I can but do that here. Maybe I shall get home with a few pezos, to die an old cripple in some stinking hovel, that a monkey would scorn to lodge in here. You may go on; it'll pay you. You may be a rich man, and a knight, and live in a fine house, and drink good wine, and go to court, and torment your soul with trying to get more, when you've got too much already; plotting and planning to scramble upon your neighbor's shoulders, as they all did—Sir Richard, and Mr. Raleigh, and Chichester, and poor dear old Sir Wadham, and all of them that I used to watch when I lived before. They were no happier than I was then; I'll warrant they are no happier now. Go your ways, Captain; climb to glory upon some other backs than ours, and leave us here in peace, alone with God and God's woods, and the good wives that God has given us, to play a little like school children. It's long since I've had play-hours; and now I'll be a little child once more, with the flowers, and the singing birds, and the silver fishes in the stream, that are at peace, and think no harm, and want neither clothes, nor money, nor knighthood, nor peerage, but just take what comes; and their heavenly Father feedeth them, and Solomon in all his glory was not

arrayed like one of these—and will he not much more feed us, that are of more value than many sparrows?"

"And will you live here, shut out from all Christian ordinances?"

"Christian ordinances? Adam and Eve had no parsons in Paradise. The Lord was their priest, and the Lord was their shepherd, and He'll be ours too. But go your ways, sir, and send up Sir John Brimblecombe, and let him marry us here Church fashion (though we have sworn troth to each other before God already), and let him give us the Holy Sacrament once and for all, and then read the funeral service over us, and go his ways, and count us for dead, sir—for dead we are to the wicked, worthless world we came out of three years ago. And when the Lord chooses to call us, the little birds will cover us with leaves, as they did the babes in the wood, and fresher flowers will grow out of our graves, sir, than out of yours in that bare Northam churchyard there beyond the weary, weary, weary sea."

His voice died away to a murmur, and his head sank on his breast.

Amyas stood spellbound. The effect of the narcotic was all but miraculous in his eyes. The sustained eloquence, the novel richness of diction in one seemingly drowned in sensual sloth, were, in his eyes, the possession of some evil spirit. And yet he could not answer the Evil One. His English heart, full of the divine instinct of duty and public spirit, told him that it must be a lie; but how to prove it a lie? And he stood for full ten minutes searching for an answer, which seemed to fly farther and farther off the more he sought for it.

His eye glanced on Ayacanora. The two girls were whispering to her smilingly. He saw one of them glance a look toward him, and then say something which raised a beautiful blush in the maiden's face. With a playful



bow at the speaker, she turned away. Amyas knew instinctively that they were giving her the same advice as Ebsworthy had given to him. Oh, how beautiful she was! Might not the renegades have some reason on their side, after all?

He shuddered at the thought; but he could not shake it off. It glided in like some gaudy snake, and wreathed its coils round all his heart and brain. He drew back to the other side of the lawn, and thought and thought—

Should he ever get home? If he did, might he not get home a beggar? Beggar or rich, he would still have to face his mother, to go through that meeting, to tell that tale; perhaps to hear those reproaches the forecast of which had weighed on him like a dark thunder-cloud for two weary years; to wipe out which by some desperate deed of glory he had wandered the wilderness, and wandered in vain.

Could he not settle here? He need not be a savage. He and his might Christianize, civilize, teach equal law, mercy in war, chivalry to women; found a community which might be hereafter as strong a barrier against the encroachments of the Spaniard as Manoa itself would have been. Who knew the wealth of the surrounding forests? Even if there were no gold, there were boundless vegetable treasures. What might he not export down the rivers? This might be the nucleus of a great commercial settlement—

And yet, was even that worth while? To settle here only to torment his soul with fresh schemes, fresh ambitions; not to rest, but only to change one labor for another? Was not your dreamer right? Did they not all need rest? What if they each sat down among the flowers, beside an Indian bride? They might live like Christians, while they lived like the birds of heaven.

What a dead silence! He looked up and round; the birds had ceased to chirp; the parroquets were hiding be-

hind the leaves; the monkeys were clustered motionless upon the highest twigs; only out of the far depths of the forest the campanero gave its solemn toll, once, twice, thrice, like a great death-knell rolling down from far cathedral towers. Was it an omen? He looked up hastily at Ayacanora. She was watching him earnestly. Heavens! was she waiting for his decision? Both dropped their eyes. The decision was not to come from them.

A rustle! a roar! a shriek! and Amyas lifted his eyes in time to see a huge dark bar shoot from the crag above the dreamer's head, among the group of girls.

A dull crash, as the group flew asunder; and in the midst, upon the ground, the tawny limbs of one were writhing beneath the fangs of a black jaguar, the rarest and most terrible of the forest kings. Of one? But of which? Was it Ayacanora? And sword in hand, Amyas rushed madly forward; before he reached the spot those tortured limbs were still.

It was not Ayacanora, for with a shriek which rang through the woods, the wretched dreamer, awakened thus at last, sprang up and felt for his sword. Fool! he had left it in his hammock! Screaming the name of his dead bride, he rushed on the jaguar, as it crouched above its prey, and seizing its head with teeth and nails, worried it, in the ferocity of his madness, like a mastiff-dog.

The brute wrenched its head from his grasp, and raised its dreadful paw. Another moment and the husband's corpse would have lain by the wife's.

But high in air gleamed Amyas's blade; down, with all the weight of his huge body and strong arm, fell that most trusty steel; the head of the jaguar dropped grinning on its victim's corpse:

"And all stood still, who saw him fall,  
While men might count a score."

"O Lord Jesus," said Amyas to himself, "Thou hast answered the devil for me! And this is the selfish rest for which I would have bartered the rest which comes by working where Thou hast put me!"

They bore away the lithe corpse into the forest, and buried it under soft moss and virgin mould; and so the fair clay was transfigured into fairer flowers, and the poor, gentle, untaught spirit returned to God who gave it.

And then Amyas went sadly and silently back again, and Parracombe walked after him, like one who walks in sleep.

Ebsworthy, sobered by the shock, entreated to come too; but Amyas forbade him gently:

"No, lad, you are forgiven. God forbid that I should judge you or any man! Sir John shall come up and marry you; and then, if it still be your will to stay, the Lord forgive you, if you be wrong; in the meanwhile, we will leave with you all that we can spare. Stay here and pray to God to make you, and me too, wiser men."

And so Amyas departed. He had come out stern and proud; but he came back again like a little child.

### RENUNCIATION<sup>1</sup>

*George Eliot (1819-1880)*

[Maggie Tulliver is staying at the farm of her Aunt Moss, when Stephen Guest, who is engaged to her cousin Lucy, appears and begs her to marry him.]

Maggie had been four days at her Aunt Moss's, giving the early June sunshine quite a new brightness in the care-dimmed eyes of that affectionate woman, and making an epoch for her cousins great and small, who were learning

<sup>1</sup> From *The Mill on the Floss*.

her words and actions by heart, as if she had been a transient avatar of perfect wisdom and beauty.

She was standing on the causeway with her aunt and a group of cousins feeding the chickens, at that quiet moment in the life of the farmyard before the afternoon milking-time. The great buildings round the hollow yard were as dreary and tumble-down as ever, but over the old garden-wall the straggling rose-bushes were beginning to toss their summer-weight, and the gray wood and old bricks of the house, on its higher level, had a look of sleepy age in the broad afternoon sunlight, that suited the quiescent time. Maggie, with her bonnet over her arm, was smiling down at the hatch of small fluffy chickens, when her aunt exclaimed:

"Goodness me! who is that gentleman coming in at the gate?"

It was a gentleman on a tall bay horse; and the flanks and neck of the horse were streaked black with fast riding. Maggie felt a beating at head and heart—horrible as the sudden leaping to life of a savage enemy who had feigned death.

"Who is it, my dear?" said Mrs. Moss, seeing in Maggie's face the evidence that she knew.

"It is Mr. Stephen Guest," said Maggie, rather faintly. "My cousin Lucy's—a gentleman who is very intimate at my cousin's."

Stephen was already close to them, had jumped off his horse, and now raised his hat as he advanced.

"Hold the horse, Willy," said Mrs. Moss to the twelve-year-old boy.

"No, thank you," said Stephen, pulling at the horse's impatiently tossing head. "I must be going again immediately. I have a message to deliver to you, Miss Tulliver—on private business. May I take the liberty of asking you to walk a few yards with me?"

He had a half-jaded, half-irritated look, such as a man gets when he has been dogged by some care or annoyance that makes his bed and his dinner of little use to him. He spoke almost abruptly, as if his errand were too pressing for him to trouble himself about what would be thought by Mrs. Moss of his visit and request. Good Mrs. Moss, rather nervous in the presence of this apparently haughty gentleman, was inwardly wondering whether she would be doing right or wrong to invite him again to leave his horse and walk in, when Maggie, feeling all the embarrassment of the situation, and unable to say anything, put on her bonnet, and turned to walk toward the gate.

Stephen turned too, and walked by her side, leading his horse.

Not a word was spoken till they were out in the lane, and had walked four or five yards, when Maggie, who had been looking straight before her all the while, turned again to walk back, saying with haughty resentment:

"There is no need for me to go any farther. I don't know whether you consider it gentlemanly and delicate conduct to place me in a position that forced me to come out with you—or whether you wished to insult me still further by thrusting an interview upon me in this way."

"Of course you are angry with me for coming," said Stephen, bitterly. "Of course, it is of no consequence what a man has to suffer—it is only your woman's dignity that you care about."

Maggie gave a slight start, such as might have come from the slightest possible electric shock.

"As if it were not enough that I'm entangled in this way—that I'm mad with love for you—that I resist the strongest passion a man can feel, because I try to be true to other claims—but you must treat me as if I were a coarse brute, who would willingly offend you. And when,

if I had my own choice, I should ask you to take my hand, and my fortune, and my whole life, and do what you liked with them! I know I forgot myself. I took an unwarrantable liberty. I hate myself for having done it. But I repented immediately—I've been repenting ever since. You ought not to think it unpardonable; a man who loves with his whole soul, as I do you, is liable to be mastered by his feelings for a moment; but you know—you must believe—that the worst pain I could have is to have pained you—that I would give the world to recall the error."

Maggie dared not speak—dared not turn her head. The strength that had come from resentment was all gone, and her lips were quivering visibly. She could not trust herself to utter the full forgiveness that rose in answer to that confession.

They were come nearly in front of the gate again, and she paused, trembling.

"You must not say these things—I must not hear them," she said, looking down in misery, as Stephen came in front of her to prevent her from going farther toward the gate. "I'm very sorry for any pain you have to go through; but it is of no use to speak."

"Yes, it *is* of use," said Stephen, impetuously. "It would be of use if you would treat me with some sort of pity and consideration, instead of doing me vile injustice in your mind. I could bear everything more quietly if I knew you didn't hate me for an insolent coxcomb. Look at me—see what a hunted devil I am! I've been riding thirty miles every day to get away from the thought of you."

Maggie did not—dared not—look. She had already seen the harassed face. But she said, gently:

"I don't think any evil of you."

"Then, dearest, look at me," said Stephen, in deepest,

tenderest tones of entreaty. "Don't go away from me yet. Give me a moment's happiness—make me feel you've forgiven me."

"Yes, I do forgive you," said Maggie, shaken by those tones, and all the more frightened at herself. "But pray let me go in again! Pray go away!"

A great tear fell from under her lowered eyelids.

"I can't go away from you—I can't leave you," said Stephen, with still more passionate pleading. "I shall come back again if you send me away with this coldness—I can't answer for myself. But if you go with me only a little way, I can live on that. You see plainly enough that your anger has only made me ten times more unreasonable."

Maggie turned. But Tancered, the bay horse, began to make such spirited remonstrances against this frequent change of direction, that Stephen, catching sight of Willy Moss peeping through the gate, called out, "Here! just come and hold my horse for five minutes."

"Oh no," said Maggie, hurriedly, "my aunt will think it so strange."

"Never mind," Stephen answered, impatiently; "they don't know the people at St. Ogg's. Lead him up and down just here, for five minutes," he added to Willy, who was now close to them; and then he turned to Maggie's side, and they walked on. It was clear that she *must* go on now.

"Take my arm," said Stephen, entreatingly; and she took it, feeling all the while as if she were sliding downward in a nightmare.

"There is no end to this misery," she began, struggling to repel the influence by speech. "It is wicked—base—ever allowing a word or look that Lucy—that others might not have seen. Think of Lucy!"

"I do think of her—bless her. If I didn't—" Stephen

had laid his hand on Maggie's that rested on his arm, and they both felt it difficult to speak.

"And I have other ties," Maggie went on, at last, with a desperate effort—"even if Lucy did not exist."

"You are engaged to Philip Wakem," said Stephen, hastily. "Is it so?"

"I consider myself engaged to him—I don't mean to marry any one else."

Stephen was silent again until they had turned out of the sun into a side lane, all grassy and sheltered. Then he burst out impetuously:

"It is unnatural—it is horrible! Maggie, if you loved me as I love you, we should throw everything else to the winds for the sake of belonging to each other. We should break all these mistaken ties that were made in blindness, and determine to marry each other."

"I would rather die than fall into that temptation," said Maggie, with deep, slow distinctness—all the gathered spiritual force of painful years coming to her aid in this extremity. She drew her arm from his as she spoke.

"Tell me, then, that you don't care for me," he said, almost violently. "Tell me that you love some one else better."

It darted through Maggie's mind that here was a mode of releasing herself from outward struggle—to tell Stephen that her whole heart was Philip's. But her lips would not utter that, and she was silent.

"If you do love me, dearest," said Stephen, gently, taking up her hand again and laying it within his arm, "it is better—it is right that we should marry each other. We can't help the pain it will give. It is come upon us without our seeking; it is natural—it has taken hold of me in spite of every effort I have made to resist it. God knows, I've been trying to be faithful to tacit engagements,



and I've only made things worse—I'd better have given way at first."

Maggie was silent. If it were *not* wrong—if she were once convinced of that, and need no longer beat and struggle against this current, soft and yet strong as the summer stream!

"Say 'yes,' dearest," said Stephen, leaning to look entreatingly in her face. "What could we care about in the whole world beside, if we belonged to each other?"

Her breath was on his face—his lips were very near hers—but there was a great dread dwelling in his love for her.

Her lips and eyelids quivered; she opened her eyes full on his for an instant, like a lovely wild animal timid and struggling under caresses, and then turned sharp round toward home again.

"And after all," he went on, in an impatient tone, trying to defeat his own scruples as well as hers, "I am breaking no positive engagement. If Lucy's affections had been withdrawn from me and given to some one else, I should have felt no right to assert a claim on her. If you are not absolutely pledged to Philip, we are neither of us bound."

"You don't believe that—it is not your real feeling," said Maggie, earnestly. "You feel, as I do, that the real tie lies in the feelings and expectations we have raised in other minds. Else all pledges might be broken, when there was no outward penalty. There would be no such thing as faithfulness."

Stephen was silent; he could not pursue that argument; the opposite conviction had wrought in him too strongly through his previous time of struggle. But it soon presented itself in a new form.

"The pledge *can't* be fulfilled," he said, with impetuous insistence. "It is unnatural; we can only pretend to give ourselves to any one else. There is wrong in that too—

there may be misery in it for *them* as well as for us. Maggie, you must see that—you do see that."

He was looking eagerly at her face for the least sign of compliance; his large, firm, gentle grasp was on her hand. She was silent for a few moments, with her eyes fixed on the ground; then she drew a deep breath, and said, looking up at him with solemn sadness—

"Oh, it is difficult—life is very difficult. It seems right to me sometimes that we should follow our strongest feeling—but then, such feelings continually come across the ties that all our former life has made for us—the ties that have made others dependent on us—and would cut them in two. If life were quite easy and simple, as it might have been in Paradise, and we could always see that one being first toward whom. . . . I mean, if life did not make duties for us before love comes—love would be a sign that two people ought to belong to each other. But I see—I feel it is not so now; there are things we must renounce in life; some of us must resign love. Many things are difficult and dark to me; but I see one thing quite clearly—that I must not, cannot, seek my own happiness by sacrificing others. Love is natural; but surely pity and faithfulness and memory are natural too. And they would live in me still, and punish me if I did not obey them. I should be haunted by the suffering I had caused. Our love would be poisoned. Don't urge me; help me—help me, *because* I love you."

Maggie had become more and more earnest as she went on; her face had become flushed, and her eyes fuller and fuller of appealing love. Stephen had the fibre of nobleness in him that vibrated to her appeal; but in the same moment—how could it be otherwise?—that pleading beauty gained new power over him.

"Dearest," he said, in scarcely more than a whisper, while his arm stole round her, "I'll do, I'll bear, anything

you wish. But—one kiss—one—the last—before we part.”

One kiss—and then a long look—until Maggie said, tremulously, “Let me go—let us make haste back.”

She hurried along, and not another word was said. Stephen stood still and beckoned when they came within sight of Willy and the horse, and Maggie went on through the gate. Mrs. Moss was standing alone at the door of the old porch; she had sent all the cousins in, with kind thoughtfulness. It might be a joyful thing that Maggie had a rich and handsome lover, but she would naturally feel embarrassed at coming in again—and it might *not* be joyful. In either case, Mrs. Moss waited anxiously to receive Maggie by herself. The speaking face told plainly enough that, if there was joy, it was of a very agitating, dubious sort.

“Sit down here a bit, my dear.” She drew Maggie into the porch, and sat down on the bench by her—there was no privacy in the house.

“Oh, Aunt Gritty, I’m very wretched. I wish I could have died when I was fifteen. It seemed so easy to give things up then—it is so hard now.”

The poor child threw her arms round her aunt’s neck, and fell into long, deep sobs.

## THE MAGNETIC AGE<sup>1</sup>

*George Meredith (1828–1909)*

[Sir Austin Feverel, of Raynham Abbey, having been unfortunate in his experience of marriage, has brought up his only child, Richard Feverel, on an educational system of his own invention, the chief purpose of which is to hedge him off from

<sup>1</sup> From *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*.

all knowledge of the world lest he should be contaminated. Richard reaches "The Magnetic Age" and, rising early one morning, goes out and discovers his adventure.]

All night Richard tossed on his bed with his heart in a rapid canter, and his brain bestriding it, traversing the rich, untasted world, and the great Realm of Mystery, from which he was now restrained no longer. Months he had wandered about the gates of the Bonnet, wondering, sighing, knocking at them, and getting neither admittance nor answer. He had the key now. His own father had given it to him. His heart was a lightning steed, and bore him on and on over limitless regions bathed in superhuman beauty and strangeness, where cavaliers and ladies leaned whispering upon close green swards, and knights and ladies cast a splendor upon savage forests, and tilts and tourneys were held in golden courts lit to a glorious day by ladies' eyes, one pair of which, dimly visioned, constantly distinguishable, followed him through the boskage and dwelt upon him in the press, beaming while he bent above a hand glittering white and fragrant as the frosted blossom of a May night.

Awhile the heart would pause and flutter to a shock; he was in the act of consummating all earthly bliss by pressing his lips to the small white hand. Only to do that, and die! cried the Magnetic Youth; to fling the Jewel of Life into that one cup and drink it off! He was intoxicated by anticipation. For that he was born. There was, then, some end in existence, something to live for! to kiss a woman's hand, and die!

Toward morning the madness of the fever abated somewhat, and he went forth into the air. A lamp was still burning in his father's room, and Richard thought, as he looked up, that he saw the ever-vigilant head on the

watch. Instantly the lamp was extinguished, the window stood cold against the hues of dawn.

Strong pulling is an excellent medical remedy for certain classes of fever. Richard took to it instinctively. The clear, fresh water, burnished with sunrise, sparkled against his arrowy prow; the soft, deep shadows curled smiling away from his gliding keel. Overhead solitary morning unfolded itself from blossom to bud, from bud to flower; still, delicious changes of light and color, to whose influences he was heedless as he shot under willows and aspens, and across sheets of river-reaches, pure mirrors to the upper glory, himself the sole tenant of the stream. Somewhere at the founts of the world lay the land he was rowing toward; something of its shadowed lights might be discerned here and there. It was not a dream, now he knew. There was a secret abroad. The woods were full of it; the waters rolled with it, and the winds. Oh, why could not one in these days do some high knightly deed which should draw down ladies' eyes from their heaven, as in the days of Arthur! To such a meaning breathed the unconscious sighs of the youth, when he had pulled through his first feverish energy.

He was off Bursley, and had lapsed a little into that musing quietude which follows strenuous exercise, when he heard a hail and his own name called. It was no lady, no fairy, but young Ralph Morton, an irruption of miserable masculine prose. Heartily wishing him abed with the rest of mankind, Richard rowed in and jumped ashore. Ralph immediately seized his arm, saying that he desired earnestly to have a talk with him, and dragged the Magnetic Youth from his water-dreams, up and down the wet mown grass. That he had to say seemed to be difficult of utterance, and Richard, though he barely listened, soon had enough of his old rival's gladness at seeing him, and ex-

hibited signs of impatience; whereat Ralph, as one who branches into matter somewhat foreign to his mind, but of great human interest and importance, put the question to him:

"I say, what woman's name do you like best?"

"I don't know any," quoth Richard, indifferently. "Why are you out so early?"

In answer to this, Ralph suggested that the name of Mary might be considered a pretty name.

Richard agreed that it might be; the housekeeper at Raynham, half the women cooks, and all the housemaids enjoyed that name; the name of Mary was equivalent for women at home.

"Yes, I know," said Ralph. "We have lots of Marys. It's so common. Oh, I don't like Mary best! What do you think of Lucy?"

Richard thought it just like another.

"Do you know," Ralph continued, throwing off the mask and plunging into the subject, "I'd do anything on earth for some names—one or two. It's not Mary, nor Lucy. Clarinda's pretty, but it's like a novel. Claribel, I like. Names beginning with 'Cl' I prefer. The 'Cl's' are always gentle and lovely girls you would die for! Don't you think so?"

Richard had never been acquainted with any of them to inspire that emotion. Indeed, these urgent appeals to his fancy in feminine names at five o'clock in the morning slightly surprised him, though he was but half awake to the outer world. By degrees he perceived that Ralph was changed. Instead of the lusty, boisterous boy, his rival in manly sciences, who spoke straightforwardly and acted up to his speech, here was an abashed and blush-persecuted youth, who sued piteously for a friendly ear wherein to pour the one idea possessing him. Gradually, too, Rich-

ard apprehended that Ralph likewise was on the frontiers of the Realm of Mystery, perhaps further toward it than he himself was; and then, as by a sympathetic stroke, was revealed to him the wonderful beauty and depth of meaning in feminine names. The theme appeared novel and delicious, fitted to the season and the hour. But the hardship was, that Richard could choose none from the number; all were the same to him; he loved them all.

"Don't you really prefer the 'Cl's'?" said Ralph, persuasively.

"Not better than the names ending in 'a' and 'y,'" Richard replied, wishing he could, for Ralph was evidently ahead of him.

"Come under these trees," said Ralph. And under the trees Ralph unbosomed. His name was down for the army; Eton was quitted forever. In a few months he would have to join his regiment, and before he left he must say good-bye to his friends. . . . Would Richard tell him Mrs. Forey's address? He had heard she was somewhere by the sea. Richard did not remember the address, but said he would willingly take charge of any letter and forward it.

Ralph dived his hand into his pocket. "Here it is. But don't let anybody see it."

"My aunt's name is not Clare," said Richard, perusing what was composed of the exterior formula. "You've addressed it to Clare herself."

That was plain to see.

"Emmeline Clementina Matilda Laura, Countess Blandish," Richard continued, in a low tone, transferring the names, and playing on the musical strings they were to him. Then he said: "Names of ladies! How they sweeten their names!"

He fixed his eyes on Ralph. If he discovered anything

further he said nothing, but bade the good fellow good-bye, jumped into his boat, and pulled down the tide. The moment Ralph was hidden by an abutment of the banks, Richard perused the address. For the first time it struck him that his cousin Clare was a very charming creature; he remembered the look of her eyes, and especially the last reproachful glance she gave him at parting. What business had Ralph to write to her? Did she not belong to Richard Feverel? He read the words again and again: Clare Doria Forey. Why, Clare was the name he liked best—nay, he loved it. Doria, too—she shared his own name with him. Away went his heart, not at a canter now, at a gallop, as one who sights the quarry. He felt too weak to pull. Clare Doria Forey—oh, perfect melody! Sliding with the tide, he heard it fluting the bosom of the hills.

When Nature has made us ripe for love, it seldom occurs that the Fates are behindhand in furnishing a temple for the flame.

Above green-flashing plunges of a weir, and shaken by the thunder below, lilies, golden and white, were swaying at anchor among the reeds. Meadow-sweet hung from the banks thick with weed and trailing bramble, and there also hung a daughter of earth. Her face was shaded by a broad straw hat with a flexible brim that left her lips and chin in the sun, and, sometimes nodding, sent forth a light of promising eyes. Across her shoulders, and behind, flowed large, loose curls, brown in shadow, almost golden where the ray touched them. She was simply dressed, befitting decency and the season. On a closer inspection you might see that her lips were stained. This blooming young person was regaling on dewberries. They grew between the bank and the water. Apparently she found the fruit abundant, for her hand was making pretty progress to her



mouth. Fastidious youth, which revolts at woman plumping her exquisite proportions on bread-and-butter, and would (we must suppose) joyfully have her scraggy to have her poetical, can hardly object to dewberries. Indeed, the act of eating them is dainty and induces musing. The dewberry is a sister to the lotus, and an innocent sister. You eat; mouth, eye, and hand are occupied, and the undrugged mind free to roam. And so it was with the damsel who knelt there. The little skylark went up above her, all song, to the smooth, southern cloud lying along the blue; from a dewy copse dark over her nodding hat the blackbird fluted, calling to her with thrice mellow note; the kingfisher flashed emerald out of green osiers; a bow-winged heron travelled aloft, seeking solitude; a boat slipped toward her, containing a dreamy youth; and still she plucked the fruit, and ate, and mused, as if no fairy prince were invading her territories, and as if she wished not for one, or knew not her wishes. Surrounded by the green shaven meadows, the pastoral summer buzz, the weir-fall's thundering white, amid the breath and beauty of wild flowers, she was a bit of lovely human life in a fair setting; a terrible attraction. The Magnetic Youth leaned round to note his proximity to the weir-piles, and beheld the sweet vision. Still and stiller grew Nature, as at the meeting of two electric clouds. Her posture was so graceful, that though he was making straight for the weir, he dared not dip a scull. Just then one enticing dewberry caught her eyes. He was floating by unheeded, and saw that her hand stretched low, and could not gather what it sought. A stroke from his right brought him beside her. The damsel glanced up dismayed, and her whole shape trembled over the brink. Richard sprang from his boat into the water. Pressing a hand beneath her foot, which she had thrust against the crumbling wet sides of

the bank to save herself, he enabled her to recover her balance, and gain safe earth, whither he followed her.

He had landed on an island of the still-vexed Bermoothes. The world lay wrecked behind him; Raynham hung in mists, remote, a phantom to the vivid reality of this white hand which had drawn him thither away thousands of leagues in an eye-twinkle. Hark, how Ariel sang overhead! What splendor in the heavens! What marvels of beauty about his enchanted brows! And, oh you wonder! Fair Flame! by whose light the glories of being are now first seen. . . . Radiant Miranda! Prince Ferdinand is at your feet.

Or is it Adam, his rib taken from his side in sleep, and thus transformed, to make him behold his Paradise, and lose it? . . .

The youth looked on her with as glowing an eye. It was the First Woman to him.

And she—mankind was all Caliban to her, saving this one princely youth.

So to each other said their changing eyes in the moment they stood together; he pale, and she blushing.

She spoke to thank him for his aid. She used quite common, simple words; and used them, no doubt, to express a common, simple meaning; but to him she was uttering magic, casting spells, and the effect they had on him was manifested in the incoherence of his replies, which were too foolish to be chronicled.

The couple were again mute. Suddenly Miranda, with an exclamation of anguish, and innumerable lights and shadows playing over her lovely face, clapped her hands, crying aloud, "My book! my book!" and ran to the bank.

Prince Ferdinand was at her side. "What have you lost?" he said.

"My book!" she answered, her delicious curls swinging

across her shoulders to the stream. Then turning to him: "Oh no, no! let me entreat you not to," she said; "I do not so very much mind losing it." And in her eagerness to restrain him she unconsciously laid her gentle hand upon his arm, and took the force of motion out of him.

"Indeed, I do not really care for the silly book," she continued, withdrawing her hand quickly, and reddening. "Pray, do not!"

The young gentleman had kicked off his shoes. No sooner was the spell of contact broken than he jumped in. The water was still troubled and discolored by his introductory adventure, and, though he ducked his head with the spirit of a dabchick, the book was missing. A scrap of paper floating from the bramble just above the water, and looking as if fire had caught its edges and it had flown from one adverse element to the other, was all he could lay hold of; and he returned to land disconsolately, to hear Miranda's murmured mixing of thanks and pretty expostulations.

"Let me try again," he said.

"No, indeed!" she replied, and used the awful threat: "I will run away if you do," which effectually restrained him.

Her eye fell on the fire-stained scrap of paper, and brightened, as she cried: "There, there! you have what I want. It is that. I do not care for the book. No, please! You are not to look at it. Give it me."

Before her playful imperative injunction was fairly spoken, Richard had glanced at the document and discovered a Griffin between two Wheatsheaves; his crest in silver; and below—O wonderment immense! his own handwriting!

He handed it to her. She took it, and put it in her bosom.

Who would have thought that, where all else perished, odes, idyls, lines, stanzas, this one sonnet to the stars should be miraculously reserved for such a starry fate—passing beatitude!

As they walked silently across the meadow, Richard strove to remember the hour and the mood of mind in which he had composed the notable production. The stars were invoked, as seeing and foreseeing all, to tell him where then his love reclined, and so forth; Hesper was complacent enough to do so, and described her in a couplet;

“Through sunset’s amber see me shining fair,  
As her blue eyes shine through her golden hair.”

And surely no words could be more prophetic. Here were two blue eyes and golden hair; and by some strange chance, that appeared like the working of a divine finger, she had become the possessor of the prophecy, she that was to fulfil it! The youth was too charged with emotion to speak. Doubtless the damsel had less to think of, or had some trifling burden on her conscience, for she seemed to grow embarrassed. At last she drew up her chin too look at her companion under the nodding brim of her hat (and the action gave her a charmingly freakish air), crying: “But where are you going to? You are wet through. Let me thank you again; and, pray, leave me, and go home and change instantly.”

“Wet?” replied the magnetic muser, with a voice of tender interest; “not more than one foot, I hope. I will leave you while you dry your stockings in the sun.”

At this she could not withhold a shy laugh.

“Not I, but you. You would try to get that silly book for me, and you are dripping wet. Are you not very uncomfortable?”

In all sincerity he assured her that he was not.

"And you really do not feel that you are wet?"

He really did not; and it was a fact that he spoke truth.

She pursed her dewberry mouth in the most comical way, and her blue eyes lightened laughter out of the half-closed lids.

"I cannot help it," she said, her mouth opening, and sounding harmonious bells of laughter in his ears. "Pardon me, won't you?"

His face took the same soft, smiling curves in admiration of her.

"Not to feel that you have been in the water, the very moment after!" she musically interjected, seeing she was excused.

"It's true," he said; and his own gravity then touched him to join a duet with her, which made them no longer feel strangers, and did the work of a month of intimacy. Better than sentiment, laughter opens the breast to love; opens the whole breast to his full quiver, instead of a corner here and there for a solitary arrow. Hail the occasion propitious, oh British young! and laugh and treat love as an honest god, and dabble not with the sentimental rouge. These two laughed, and the soul of each cried out to other, "It is I, it is I!"

They laughed and forgot the cause of their laughter, and the sun dried his light river clothing, and they strolled toward the blackbird's copse, and stood near a stile in sight of the foam of the weir and the many-colored rings of eddies streaming forth from it.

Richard's boat, meanwhile, had contrived to shoot the weir, and was swinging, bottom upward, broadside with the current down the rapid backwater.

"Will you let it go?" said the damsel, eying it curiously.

"It can't be stopped," he replied, and could have added; "What do I care for it now?"

His old life was whirled away with it, dead, drowned. His new life was with her, alive, divine.

She flapped low the brim of her hat. "You must really not come any farther," she softly said.

"And will you go, and not tell me who you are?" he asked, growing bold as the fears of losing her came across him. "And will you not tell me before you go"—his face burned—"how you came by that—that paper?"

She chose to select the easier question for answer: "You ought to know me; we have been introduced." Sweet was her winning offhand affability.

"Then who, in Heaven's name, are you? Tell me! I never could have forgotten you."

"You have, I think," she said.

"Impossible that we could ever have met, and I forget you!"

She looked up at him.

"Do you remember Belthorpe?"

"Belthorpe! Belthorpe!" quoth Richard, as if he had to touch his brain to recollect there was such a place.

"Do you mean old Blaize's farm?"

"Then I am old Blaize's niece." She tripped him a soft curtsy.

The magnetized youth gazed at her. By what magic was it that this divine, sweet creature could be allied with that old churl?

"Then what—what is your name?" said his mouth, while his eyes added, "Oh, wonderful creature! How came you to enrich the earth?"

"Have you forgot the Desboroughs of Dorset, too?" She peered at him from a side-bend of the flapping brim.

"The Desboroughs of Dorset?" A light broke in on him. "And have you grown to this? That little girl I saw there!"

He drew close to her to read the nearest features of the

vision. She could no more laugh off the piercing fervor of his eyes. Her volubility fluttered under his deeply wistful look, and now neither voice was high, and they were mutually constrained.

"You see," she murmured, "we are old acquaintances."

Richard, with his eyes still intently fixed on her, returned, "You are very beautiful!"

The words slipped out. Perfect simplicity is unconsciously audacious. Her overpowering beauty struck his heart, and, like an instrument that is touched and answers to the touch, he spoke.

Miss Desborough made an effort to trifle with this terrible directness; but his eyes would not be gainsaid, and checked her lips. She turned away from them, her bosom a little rebellious. Praise so passionately spoken, and by one who has been a damsel's first dream, dreamed of nightly many long nights, and clothed in the virgin silver of her thoughts in bud, praise from him is coin the heart cannot reject, if it would. She quickened her steps.

"I have offended you!" said a mortally wounded voice across her shoulder.

That he should think so were too dreadful.

"Oh no, no! you would never offend me." She gave him her whole sweet face.

"Then why—why do you leave me?"

"Because," she hesitated, "I must go."

"No! You must not go. Why must you go? Do not go."

"Indeed I must," she said, pulling at the obnoxious broad brim of her hat; and, interpreting a pause he made for his assent to her rational resolve, shyly looking at him, she held her hand out, and said, "Good-bye," as if it were a natural thing to say.

The hand was pure white—white and fragrant as the frosted blossom of a May night. It was the hand whose

shadow, cast before, he had last night bent his head reverentially above, and kissed—resigning himself thereupon over to execution for payment of the penalty of such daring—by such bliss well rewarded.

He took the hand and held it, gazing between her eyes.

“Good-bye,” she said again, as frankly as she could, and at the same time slightly compressing her fingers on his in token of adieu. It was a signal for his to close firmly upon hers.

“You will not go?”

“Pray, let me,” she pleaded, her sweet brows suing in wrinkles.

“You will not go?” Mechanically he drew the white hand nearer his thumping heart.

“I must,” she faltered, piteously.

“You will not go?”

“Oh yes! yes!”

“Tell me. Do you wish to go?”

The question was a subtle one. A moment or two she did not answer, and then forswore herself, and said, “Yes.”

“Do you—you wish to go?” He looked with quivering eyelids under hers.

A fainter “Yes” responded.

“You wish—wish to leave me?” His breath went with the words.

“Indeed I must.”

Her hand became a closer prisoner.

All at once an alarming, delicious shudder went through her frame. From him to her it coursed, and back from her to him. Forward and back love’s electric messenger rushed from heart to heart, knocking at each, till it surged tumultuously against the bars of its prison, crying out for its mate. They stood trembling in unison, a lovely couple under these fair heavens of the morning.



When he could get his voice it said, "Will you go?"

But she had none to reply with, and could only mutely bend upward her gentle wrist.

"Then, farewell!" he said, and, dropping his lips to the soft, fair hand, kissed it, and hung his head, swinging away from her, ready for death.

Strange, that now she was released she should linger by him. Strange, that his audacity, instead of the executioner, brought blushes and timid tenderness to his side, and the sweet words, "You are not angry with me?"

"With you, O Beloved!" cried his soul. "And you forgive me, fair charity!"

"I think it were rude of me to go without thanking you again," she said, and again proffered her hand.

The sweet heaven-bird shivered out his song above him. The gracious glory of heaven fell upon his soul. He touched her hand, not moving his eyes from her, nor speaking, and she, with a soft word of farewell, passed across the stile, and up the pathway through the dewy shades of the copse, and out of the arch of the light, away from his eyes.

And away with her went the wild enchantment. He looked on barren air. But it was no more the world of yesterday. The marvellous splendors had sown seeds in him, ready to spring up and bloom at her gaze; and in his bosom now the vivid conjuration of her tones, her face, her shape, makes them leap and illumine him like fitful summer lightnings—ghosts of the vanished sun.

There was nothing to tell him that he had been making love and declaring it with extraordinary rapidity; nor did he know it. Soft, flushed cheeks! sweet mouth! strange, sweet brows! eyes of softest fire! how could his ripe eyes behold you, and not plead to keep you? Nay, how could he let you go? And he seriously asked himself that question.

To-morrow this place will have a memory—the river and the meadow, and the white, falling weir; his heart will build a temple here; and the skylark will be its high-priest, and the old blackbird its glossy-gowned chorister, and there will be a sacred repast of dewberries. To-day the grass is grass; his heart is chased by phantoms and finds rest nowhere. Only when the most tender freshness of his flower comes across him does he taste a moment's calm; and no sooner does it come than it gives place to keen pangs of fear that she may not be his forever.

Erelong he learns that her name is Lucy. Erelong he meets Ralph, and discovers that in a day he has distanced him by a sphere. He and Ralph and the curate of Lorraine join in their walks, and raise classical discussions on ladies' hair, fingering a thousand delicious locks, from those of Cleopatra to the Borgias. "Fair! fair! all of them fair!" sighs the melancholy curate, "as are those women formed for our perdition! I think we have in this country what will match the Italian or the Greek." His mind flutters to Mrs. Doria, Richard blushes before the vision of Lucy, and Ralph, whose heroine's hair is a dark luxuriance, dissents, and claims a noble share in the slaughter of men for dark-haired Wonders. They have no mutual confidences, but they are singularly kind to each other, these three children of instinct.

#### TEMPTATION<sup>1</sup>

*J. Henry Shorthouse (1834-1903)*

[John Inglesant finds himself in the pavilion in the forest, in the company of Lauretta.]

The night air was heavy and close, not a breath of wind stirred the lights, though every window was thrown open,

<sup>1</sup> From *John Inglesant*.

and the shutters that closed the loggia outside were drawn back. In the brilliant moonlight every leaf of the great forest shone with an unnatural distinctness, which, set in a perfect silence, became terrible to see. The sylvan arcades seemed like a painted scene-piece upon a Satanic stage supernaturally alight to further deeds of sin, and silent and unpeopled, lest the wrong should be interrupted or checked. To Inglesant's excited fancy evil beings thronged its shadowy paths, present to the spiritual sense, though concealed of set purpose from the feeble human sight. The two found their eyes drawn with a kind of fascination to this strange sight, and Inglesant arose and closed the shutters before the nearest casement.

They felt more at ease when the mysterious forest was shut out. But Lauretta was silent and troubled, and Inglesant's efforts to cheer and enliven her were not successful. The delicious wines to which he resorted to remove his own uneasiness and to cure his companion's melancholy failed of their effect. At last she refused to drink, and rising up suddenly, she exclaimed:

"Oh, it is terribly hot! I cannot bear it. I wish we had not come!"

She wandered from the room in which they sat, through the curtained doorway, into the next, which was furnished with couches, and sank down on one of them. Inglesant followed her, and, as if the heat felt stifling also to him, went out upon the open veranda, and looked upon the forest once more.

Excited by the revels of the past few days, heated with wine, with the night ride, and with the overpowering closeness of the air, the temptation came upon him with a force which he had neither power nor desire to resist. He listened, but no sound met his ear, no breath stirred, no living being moved, no disturbance need be dreaded from any

side. From the people in the pavilion he looked for no interference, from the object of his desires he had probably no need to anticipate any disinclination but what might easily be soothed away. The universal custom of the country in which he was now almost naturalized sanctioned such acts. The hour was admirably chosen, the place perfectly adapted in every way, as if the result not of happy chance but deeply concerted plan.

Why then did he hesitate? Did he still partly hope that some miracle would happen? or some equally miraculous change take place in his mind and will to save him from himself? It is true the place and the temptation were not of his own seeking—so far he was free from blame; but he had not come wholly unharmed out of the fiery trial at Umbria, and, by a careless walk since he came to Florence, he had prepared the way for the tempter, and this night even he had disregarded the warning voice and drifted recklessly onward. We walk of our own free will, heated and inflamed by wine, down the flowery path which we have ourselves decorated with garlands, and we murmur because we reach the fatal goal.

He gazed another moment over the illumined forest, which seemed transfigured in the moonlight and the stillness into an unreal landscape of the dead. The poisonous mists crept over the tops of the cork-trees, and flitted across the long vistas in spectral forms, cowed and shrouded for the grave. Beneath the gloom indistinct figures seemed to glide—the personation of the miasma that made the place so fatal to human life.

He turned to enter the room, but even as he turned a sudden change came over the scene. The deadly glamour of the moonlight faded suddenly, a calm, pale, solemn light settled over the forest, the distant line of hills shone out distinct and clear, the evil mystery of the place de-

parted whence it came, a fresh and cooling breeze sprang up and passed through the rustling wood, breathing pureness and life. The dayspring was at hand in the eastern sky.

The rustling breeze was like a whisper from heaven that reminded him of his better self. It would seem that hell overdid it; the very stillness for miles around, the almost concerted plan, sent flashing through his brain the remembrance of another house, equally guarded for a like purpose—a house at Nuneham near Oxford, into which years ago he had himself forced his way to render help in such a case as this. Here was the same thing happening over again with the actors changed; was it possible that such a change had been wrought in him? The long, past life of those days rushed into his mind; the sacramental Sundays, the repeated vows, the light of heaven in the soul, the kneeling forms in Little Gidding Chapel, the face of Mary Collet, the loveliness that blessed the earth where she walked, her death-bed, and her dying words. What so rarely happens happened here. The revulsion of feeling, the rush of recollection and association, was too powerful for the flesh. The reason and the affections rallied together, and, trained into efficiency by past discipline, regained the mastery by a supreme effort, even at the very moment of unsatisfied desire. But the struggle was fierce; he was torn like the demon-haunted child in the gospel story; but, as in that story, the demon was expelled.

He came back into the room. Lauretta lay upon a couch with rich drapery and cushions, her face buried in her hands. The cloak and hood in which she had ridden were removed, and the graceful outline of her figure was rendered more alluring by the attitude in which she lay. As he entered she raised her head from her hands, and looked at him with a strange, apprehensive, expectant

gaze. He remained for a moment silent, his face very pale; then he said, slowly and uncertainly, like a man speaking in a dream:

"The fatal miasma is rising from the plain. Lauretta, this place is safe for neither of us, we had better go on."

### TESS AND ANGEL CLARE<sup>1</sup>

*Thomas Hardy (1840)*

[Tess, who has been ruined while yet a girl by Alec D'Urberville, has come to Dairyman Crick's farm, where her history is not known. Here she encounters Angel Clare, a gentleman who is learning dairy-farming. Three of the dairymaids are in love with him, Izz Huett, Retty, and Marian, but he will look at none save Tess.]

It was a typical summer evening in June, the atmosphere being in such delicate equilibrium and so transmissive that inanimate objects seemed endowed with two or three senses, if not five. There was no distinction between the near and the far, and an auditor felt close to everything within the horizon. The soundlessness impressed her as a positive entity rather than as the mere negation of noise. It was broken by the strumming of strings.

Tess had heard those notes in the attic above her head. Dim, flattened, constrained by their confinement, they had never appealed to her as now, when they wandered in the still air with a stark quality like that of nudity. To speak absolutely, both instrument and execution were poor; but the relative is all, and as she listened, Tess, like a fascinated bird, could not leave the spot. Far from leaving,

<sup>1</sup> From *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Copyright, 1891, 1892, 1893, by Harper & Brothers.

she drew up toward the performer, keeping behind the hedge that he might not guess her presence.

The outskirt of the garden in which Tess found herself had been left uncultivated for some years, and was now damp and rank with juicy grass which sent up mists of pollen; and tall blooming weeds, emitting offensive smells—weeds whose red and yellow and purple hues formed a polychrome as dazzling as that of cultivated flowers. She went stealthily as a cat through this profusion of growth, gathering cuckoo-spittle on her skirts, brushing off snails that were climbing the apple-tree stems, staining her hands with thistle-milk and slug-slime, and rubbing off upon her naked arms sticky blights that, though snow-white on the tree-trunks, made blood-red stains on her skin; thus she drew quite near to Clare, though still unobserved of him.

Tess was conscious of neither time nor space. The exaltation which she had described as being producible at will by gazing at a star came now without any determination of hers; she undulated upon the thin notes as upon billows, and their harmonies passed like breezes through her, bringing tears into her eyes. The floating pollen seemed to be his notes made visible, and the dampness of the garden, the weeping of the garden's sensibility. Though near nightfall, the rank-smelling weed-flowers glowed as if they would not close for intentness, and the waves of color mixed with the waves of sound.

The light which still shone was derived entirely from a large hole in the western bank of cloud; it was like a piece of the day left behind by accident, dusk having closed in elsewhere. He concluded his plaintive melody, a very simple performance, demanding no great skill; and she waited, thinking another might be begun. But, tired of playing, he had desultorily come round the fence, and was

rambling up behind her. Tess, her cheeks on fire, moved away furtively, as if hardly moving at all.

Angel, however, saw her light summer gown, and he spoke, his low tones quite reaching her, though he was some distance off.

"What makes you draw off in that way, Tess?" said he. "Are you afraid?"

"Oh no, sir. . . . That is, not of outdoor things, especially just now, when the apple-blooth is falling, and everything so green."

"But you have your indoor fears—eh?"

"Well—yes, sir."

"What of?"

"I couldn't quite say."

"The milk turning sour?"

"No."

"Life in general?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ah—so have I, very often. This hobble of being alive is rather serious, don't you think so?"

"It is—now you put it that way, sir."

"All the same, I shouldn't have expected a young girl like you to see it so just yet. How is it you do?"

She maintained a hesitating silence.

"Come, Tess, tell me in confidence."

She thought that he meant what were the aspects of things to her, and replied shyly: "The trees have inquisitive eyes, haven't they?—that is, seem as if they had. And the river says, 'Why do ye trouble me with your looks?' And you seem to see numbers of to-morrows just all in a line, the first of 'em the biggest and clearest, the others getting smaller and smaller as they stand farther away; but they all seem very fierce and cruel and as if they said, 'I'm coming! Beware o' me! Beware o' me!' . . .



But you, sir—*you*,” she exclaimed, with almost bitter envy; “you can raise up dreams with your music, and drive all such horrid fancies away!”

He was surprised to find this young woman—who, though but a milkmaid, had just that touch of rarity about her which might make her the envied of her housemates—shaping such sad imaginings. But he was more surprised when he considered that she was expressing in her own native phrases—assisted a little by her Sixth Standard training—feelings which might almost have been called those of the age, the ache of modernism. The perception arrested him less when he reflected that what are called advanced ideas are really in great part but the latest fashion in definition—a more accurate expression, by words in *logy* and *ism*, of sensations which men and women have vaguely grasped for centuries.

Still, it was strange that they should have come to her while yet so young; more than strange—it was impressive, interesting, pathetic. Not guessing the cause, there was nothing to remind him that experience is as to intensity, and not as to duration. He did not know that Tess’s passing corporeal blight had been her mental harvest.

Tess, on her part, could not understand why a man of clerical family and good education, and above physical want, should look upon it as a mishap to be alive. For the unhappy pilgrim herself there was very good reason. But how could this admirable and poetic man ever have descended into the Valley of Humiliation, have felt with the man of Uz—as she herself had felt two or three years ago—“My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than my life. I loathe it; I would not live alway.”

It was true that he was at present out of his class. But she knew that was only because, like Peter the Great in a shipwright’s yard, he was studying what he wanted to

know. He did not milk cows because he was obliged to milk cows, but because he was learning how to be a rich and prosperous dairyman, landowner, agriculturist, and breeder of cattle. He would become an American or Australian Abraham, commanding like a monarch his flocks and his herds, his spotted and his ring-straked, his men-servants and his maids. At times, nevertheless, it did seem unaccountable to her that a decidedly bookish, musical, thinking young man should have chosen deliberately to be a farmer, and not a clergyman, like his father and brothers.

Thus, neither having the clew to the other's secret, they were mutually puzzled at what each revealed, and awaited new knowledge of each other's character and moods without attempting to pry into each other's history.

The hot weather of July had crept onward upon them unawares, and the atmosphere of the flat vale hung heavy as an opiate over the dairy folk, the cows, and the trees. Hot steaming rains fell frequently, making the grass where the cows fed yet more rank, and hindering the late hay-making in the other meads.

It was Sunday morning; the milking was done; the outdoor milkers had gone home. Tess and the other three were dressing themselves rapidly, the whole four having agreed to go together to Mellstock Church, which lay some three miles distant from the dairy-house. She had now been two months at Talbothays, and this was her first excursion.

All the preceding afternoon and night heavy thunderstorms had hissed down upon the meads, and washed some of the hay into the river; but this morning the sun shone out all the more brilliantly for the deluge, and the air was balmy and clear.

The crooked lane leading from their own parish to Mellstock ran along the lowest levels in a portion of its length, and when the girls reached the most depressed spot they found that the result of the rain had been to flood the lane over shoe to a distance of some fifty yards. This would have been no serious hindrance on a week-day; they would have clicked through it in their high pattens and boots quite unconcerned; but on this day of vanity, this Sun's-day, when flesh went forth to coquet with flesh while hypocritically affecting business with spiritual things; on this occasion for wearing their white stockings and thin shoes, and their pink, white, and lilac gowns, on which every mud-spot would be visible, the pool was an awkward impediment. They could hear the church-bell calling—as yet nearly a mile off.

“Who would have expected such a rise in the river in summer-time!” said Marian, from the top of the roadside bank on which they had climbed, and were maintaining a precarious footing in the hope of creeping along its slope till they were past the pool.

“We can't get there anyhow, without walking right through it, or else going round Stone Bridge way; and that would make us so very late!” said Retty, pausing hopelessly.

“And I do color up so hot, walking into church late, and all the people staring round,” said Marian, “that I hardly cool down again till we get into the ‘That-it-may-please-Thees.’”

While they stood clinging to the bank they heard a splashing round the bend of the road, and presently appeared Angel Clare, advancing along the lane toward them through the water.

Four hearts gave a big throb simultaneously.

His aspect was probably as un-Sabbatarian a one as a

dogmatic parson's son often presented, being attired in his dairy clothes and long wading boots, with a thistle-spud to finish him off.

"He's not going to church," said Marian.

"No—I wish he was," murmured Tess.

Angel, in fact, rightly or wrongly (to adopt the safe phrase of evasive controversialists), preferred sermons in stones to sermons in churches and chapels on fine summer days. This morning, moreover, he had gone out to see if the damage to the hay by the flood was considerable or not. On his walk he observed the girls from a long distance, though they had been so occupied with their difficulties of passage as not to notice him. He knew that the water had risen at that spot, and that it would quite check their progress. So he had hastened on, with a dim idea of how he could help them—one of them in particular.

The rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed quartet looked so charming in their light summer attire, clinging to the roadside bank like pigeons on a pent-roof, that he stopped a moment to regard them before coming close. Their gauzy skirts had brushed up from the grass during their promenade innumerable flies and butterflies which, unable to escape, remained caged in the transparent tissue as in an aviary. Angel's eye at last fell upon Tess, the hindmost of the four; and, being full of suppressed laughter at their dilemma, she could not help meeting his glance radiantly.

He came beneath them in the water, which did not rise over his long boots, and stood looking at the entrapped flies and butterflies.

"Are you trying to get to church?" he said to Marian, who was in front, including the next two in his remark, but avoiding Tess.

"Yes, sir; and 'tis getting late; and my colors do come up so—"

"I'll carry you through the pool—every Jill of you."

The whole four flushed as if one heart beat through them.

"I think you can't, sir," said Marian.

"It is the only way for you to get past. Stand still. Nonsense, you are not too heavy! I'd carry you all four together."

"Now, Marian, attend," he continued, "and put your arms round my shoulders, so. Now! Hold on. That's well done."

Marian had lowered herself upon his arm and shoulder as directed, and Angel strode off with her, his slim figure, as viewed from behind, looking like the mere stem to the great nosegay suggested by hers. They disappeared round the curve of the road, and only his sousing footsteps and the top ribbon of Marian's bonnet told where they were. In a few minutes he reappeared. Izz Huett was the next in order upon the bank.

"Here he comes," she murmured, and they could hear that her lips were dry with emotion, "and I have to put my arms round his neck and look into his face as Marian did."

"There's nothing in that," said Tess, quickly.

"There's a time for everything," continued Izz, unheeding. "A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; the first is now going to be mine."

"Fie—it is Scripture, Izz!"

"Yes," said Izz, "I've always a' ear at church for good verses."

Angel Clare, to whom three-quarters of this performance was a commonplace act of kindness, now approached Izz; she quietly and dreamily lowered herself into his arms, and Angel methodically marched off with her. When he was heard returning for the third time, Retty's throbbing heart

could be almost seen to shake her. He went up to the red-haired girl, and, while he was seizing her, he glanced at Tess. His lips could not have pronounced more plainly, "It will soon be you and I." Her comprehension appeared in her face; she could not help it. There was an understanding between them.

Poor little Retty, though by far the lightest weight, was the most troublesome of Clare's burdens. Marian had been like a sack of meal, or dead weight of plumpness under which he had literally staggered. Izz had ridden sensibly and calmly. Retty was a bunch of hysterics.

However, he got through with the disquieted creature, deposited her, and returned. Tess could see over the hedge the distant three in a group, standing as he had placed them on the next rising ground. It was now her turn. She was embarrassed to discover that the excitement at the proximity of Mr. Clare's breath and eyes, which she had contemned in her companions, was intensified in herself; and as if fearful of betraying her secret, she paltered with him at the last moment.

"I may be able to clim' along the bank, perhaps, sir—I can clim' better than they. You must be so tired, Mr. Clare!"

"No, no, Tess!" said he, quickly. And almost before she was aware she was seated in his arms and resting against his shoulder.

"Three Leahs to get one Rachel," he whispered.

"They are better women than I," she replied, magnanimously sticking to her resolve.

"Not to me," said Angel.

He felt her grow warm at this; and they went some steps in silence.

"I hope I am not too heavy," she said, timidly.

"Oh no. You should lift Marian! Such a lump! You

are like an undulating billow warmed by the sun. And all this fluff of muslin about you is the froth."

"It is very pretty—if I seem like that to you."

"Do you know that I have undergone three-quarters of this labor entirely for the sake of the fourth quarter?"

"No."

"I did not expect such an event to-day."

"Nor I. . . . The water came up so sudden."

That the rise in the water was what she understood him to refer to, the state of her breathing belied. Clare stood still, and inclined his face toward hers.

"Oh, Tessie!" he said, pressing close against her.

The girl's cheeks burned to the breeze, and she could not look into his eyes for her emotion. It reminded Angel that he was somewhat unfairly taking advantage of an accidental position, and he went no further with it. No definite words of love had crossed their lips as yet, and suspension at this point was desirable now. However, he walked slowly, to make the remainder of the distance as long as possible; but at last they came to the bend, and the rest of their progress was in full view of the other three. The dry land was reached, and he set her down.

Her friends were looking with round, thoughtful eyes at her and him, and she could see that they had been talking of her. He hastily bade them farewell, and splashed back along the stretch of submerged road.

The four moved on together as before, till Marian broke the silence by saying, "No—in all truth, we have no chance against her!" She looked joylessly at Tess.

"What do you mean?" asked the latter.

"He likes 'ee best—the very best! We could see it as he brought 'ee. He would have kissed 'ee if you had encouraged him to do it, ever so little."

"No, no," said she.

The gayety with which they had set out had somehow vanished; and yet there was no enmity or malice between them. They were generous young souls; they had been reared in the lonely country nooks where fatalism is a strong sentiment, and they did not blame her. Such supplanting was to be.

Tess's heart ached. There was no concealing from herself the fact that she loved Angel Clare, perhaps all the more passionately from knowing that the others had also lost their hearts to him. There is contagion in this sentiment, especially among women. And yet that same hungry heart of hers compassionated her friends. Tess's honest nature had fought against this, but too feebly, and the natural result had followed.

"I will never stand in your way, nor in the way of either of 'eel" she declared to Retty that night in the bedroom (her tears running down). "I can't help this, my dear! I don't think marrying is in his mind at all; but if he were even to ask me I should refuse him, as I should refuse any man."

"Oh! would you? Why?" said wondering Retty.

"It cannot be. But I will be plain. Putting myself quite on one side, I don't think he will choose either of you."

"I have never expected it—thought of it!" moaned Retty. "But oh! I wish I was dead!"

The poor child, torn by a feeling which she hardly understood, turned to the two other girls, who came up-stairs just then.

"We be friends with her again," she said to them. "She thinks no more of his choosing her than we do." So the reserve went off, and they were confiding and warm.

"I don't seem to care what I do now," said Marian, whose mood was tuned to its lowest bass. "I was going



to marry a dairyman at Stickleford, who's asked me twice; but—my word—I would put an end to myself rather'n be his wife now! Why don't ye speak, Izz?"

"To confess, then," said Izz, "I made sure to-day that he was going to kiss me as he held me; and I stayed still against his shoulder, hoping and hoping, and never moved at all. But he did not. I don't like biding here at Talbothays any longer. I shall go home."

The air of the sleeping-chamber seemed to palpitate with the hopeless passion of the girls. They writhed feverishly under the oppressiveness of an emotion thrust on them by cruel Nature's law—an emotion which they had neither expected nor denied. The incident of the day had fanned the flame that was burning the inside of their hearts out, and the torture was almost more than they could endure. The differences which distinguished them as individuals were abstracted by this passion, and each was but portion of one organism called sex. There was so much frankness and so little jealousy because there was no hope. Each one was a girl of fair common sense, and she did not delude herself with any vain conceits, or deny her love, or give herself airs, in the idea of outshining the others. The full recognition of the futility of their infatuation, from a social point of view; its purposeless beginning; its self-bounded outlook; its lack of everything to justify its existence in the eye of civilization (while lacking nothing in the eye of Nature); the one fact that it did exist ecstasizing them to a killing joy—all this imparted to them a resignation, a dignity, which a practical and sordid expectation of winning him as a husband would have destroyed.

They tossed and turned on their little beds, and the cheese-wring dripped monotonously down-stairs.

"B' you awake, Tess?" whispered one, half an hour later. It was Izz Huett's voice.

Tess replied in the affirmative; whereupon also Retty and Marian suddenly flung the bedclothes off them, and sighed, "So be wel"

"I wonder what she is like—the lady they say his family have looked out for him."

"I wonder," said Izz.

"Some lady looked out for him?" gasped Tess, starting.

"I have never heard o' that!"

"Oh yes, 'tis whispered a young lady of his own rank, chosen by his family, a Doctor of Divinity's daughter near his father's parish of Emminster; he don't much care for her, they say. But he is sure to marry her."

They had heard so very little of this, yet it was enough to build up wretched, dolorous dreams upon, there in the shade of the night. They pictured all the details of his being won round to consent, of the wedding preparations, of the bride's happiness, of her dress and veil, of her blissful home with him, when oblivion would have fallen upon themselves as far as he and their love were concerned. Thus they talked, and ached, and wept till sleep charmed their sorrow away.

After this disclosure Tess nourished no further foolish thought that there lurked any grave and deliberate import in Clare's attentions to her. It was a passing summer love of her face, for love's own temporary sake—nothing more. And the thorny crown of this sad conclusion was that she whom he really did prefer in a cursory way to the rest, she who knew herself to be more impassioned in nature, cleverer, more beautiful than they, was in the eyes of society far less worthy of him than the homelier ones whom he ignored.

Amid the oozing fatness and warm ferments of the Var Vale, at a season when the rush of juices could almost be heard below the hiss of fertilization, it was impossible that

the most fanciful love should not grow passionate. The ready hearts existing there were impregnated by their surroundings.

July passed over their heads, and the Thermidorean weather which came in its wake seemed an effort on the part of Nature to match the state of hearts at Talbothays Dairy. The air of the place, so fresh in the spring and early summer, was stagnant and enervating now. Its heavy scents weighed upon them, and at midday the landscape seemed lying in a swoon. Ethiopic scorplings browned the upper slopes of the pastures, but there was still bright green herbage here where the water-courses purled. And as Clare was oppressed by the outward heats, so was he burdened inwardly by a waxing fervor of passion for the soft and silent Tess.

The rains having passed, the uplands were dry. The wheels of the dairyman's spring cart, as he sped home from market, licked up the pulverized surface of the highway, and were followed by white ribands of dust, as if they had set a thin powder-train on fire. The cows jumped wildly over the five-barred barton-gate, maddened by the gadfly; Dairyman Crick kept his shirt-sleeves permanently rolled up past his elbows from Monday till Saturday; open windows produced no effect in ventilation without open doors, and in the dairy-garden the blackbirds and thrushes crept about under the currant-bushes, rather in the manner of quadrupeds than of winged creatures. The flies in the kitchen were lazy, teasing, and familiar, crawling about in unwonted places, on the floor, into drawers, and over the backs of the milkmaids' hands. Conversations were concerning sunstroke, while butter-making, and still more, butter-keeping, was a despair.

They milked entirely in the meads for coolness and convenience, without driving in the cows. During the day

the animals obsequiously followed the shadow of the smallest tree at hand as it moved round the stem with the diurnal roll; and when the milkers came they could hardly stand still for the flies.

On one of these afternoons four or five un milked cows chanced to stand apart from the general herd, behind the corner of a hedge, among them being Dumpling and Old Pretty, who loved Tess's hands above those of any other maid. When she rose from her stool under a finished cow, Angel Clare, who had been musingly observing her for some time as she milked, asked her if she would take the aforesaid creatures next. She silently assented, and with her stool at arm's length, and the pail against her knee, she went round to where they stood. Soon the sound of Old Pretty's milk fizzing into the pail came through the hedge, and then Angel felt inclined to go round the corner also, to finish off a hard-yielding milcher who had strayed there, he being now as capable of this as the dairyman himself.

All the men, and some of the women, when milking, dug their foreheads into the cows and gazed into the pail. But a few—mainly the younger ones—rested their heads sideways. This was Tess Durbeyfield's habit, her temple pressing the milcher's flank, her eyes fixed on the far end of the meadow with the gaze of one lost in meditation. She was milking Old Pretty thus, and, the sun chancing to be on the milking side, it shone flat upon her pink-gowned form, and her white curtain-bonnet, and upon her profile, rendering it dazzlingly keen, as a cameo cut from the dun background of the cow.

She did not know that Clare had followed her round, and that he sat under his cow watching her. The absolute stillness of her head and features was remarkable; she might have been in a trance, her eyes open, yet unseeing. Nothing in the picture moved but Old Pretty's tail and

Tess's pink hands, the latter so gently as to be a rhythmic pulsation only, conveying the fancy that they were obeying a merely reflex stimulus, like a beating heart.

How very lovable her face was to him! There was nothing ethereal about it; all was real vitality, real warmth, real incarnation. Yet when all was thought and felt that could be thought and felt about her features in general, it was her mouth which turned out to be the magnetic pole thereof. Eyes almost as deep and speaking he had seen before, and cheeks perhaps as fair; brows as arched, a chin and throat almost as shapely; her mouth he had seen nothing at all to equal on the face of the earth. To a young man with the least fire in him, that little upward lift in the middle of her top lip was distracting, infatuating, maddening. He had never before seen a woman's lips and teeth which forced upon his mind, with such persistent iteration, the old Elizabethan simile of roses filled with snow. Perfect, he, as a lover, might have called them off-hand. But no; they were not perfect. And it was the touch of the imperfect upon the intended perfect that gave the sweetness, because it was that which gave the humanity.

Clare had studied the curves of those lips so many hours that he could reproduce them mentally with comparative ease; and now, as they again confronted him, clothed with color and life, they sent an *aura* over his flesh, a cold breeze through his nerves, which well-nigh produced a qualm; and actually produced, by some mysterious physiological process, a prosaic sneeze.

She then became conscious that he was observing her; but she would not show it by any change of position, though the curious dream-like fixity disappeared, and a close eye might easily have discerned that the rosiness of her face slowly deepened, and then faded till only a tinge of it was left.

The stimulus that had passed into Clare like an annunciation from the sky did not die down. Resolutions, reticences, prudences, fears, fell back like a defeated battalion. He jumped up from his seat, and, leaving his pail to be kicked over if the milcher had such a mind, went quickly toward the desire of his eyes, and, kneeling down beside her, clasped her in his arms.

Tess was taken completely by surprise, and she yielded to his embrace with unreflecting inevitableness. Having seen that it was really her lover who had advanced, and no one else, her lips parted, and she sank upon him in her momentary joy, with something very like an ecstatic cry.

He had been on the point of kissing that too tempting mouth of hers, but he checked himself, even for tender conscience' sake. "Forgive me, Tess dear," he whispered. "I ought to have asked. I—did not know what I was doing. I do not mean it as a liberty at all—I—am devoted to you, Tessie, dearest, with all my soul."

Old Pretty by this time had looked round, puzzled; and seeing two people crouching under her where, according to immemorial custom, there should have been only one, lifted her hind leg crossly.

"She is angry—she doesn't know what we mean—she'll kick over the milk!" exclaimed Tess, gently striving to free herself, her eyes concerned with the quadruped's actions, her heart more deeply concerned with herself and Clare.

"Let me lift you up—lean upon me."

He raised her from her seat, and they stood together, his arm still encircling her. Tess's eyes, fixed on distance, began to fill.

"Why do you cry, my darling?" he said.

"Oh—I don't know!" she murmured, regretfully. As she saw and felt more clearly the position she was in, she became agitated, and tried to withdraw.

"Well, I have betrayed my feeling, Tess, at last," said he, with a curious sigh of desperation, signifying, unconsciously, that his heart had outrun his judgment. "That I love you dearly and truly I need not say. But I—it shall go no further now—it distresses you—I am as surprised as you are. You will not think I have presumed upon your defencelessness—been too quick and unreflecting, will you?"

"I don't know!"

He had reluctantly allowed her to free herself; and in a minute or two the milking of each was resumed. Nobody had beheld the unpremeditated gravitation of the two into one; and when the dairyman came round by that screened nook a few minutes later there was not a sign to reveal that the markedly sundered pair were more to each other than mere acquaintance. Yet, in the interval since Crick's last view of them, something had occurred which changed the pivot of the universe for their two natures—whilst it should last; something which, had he known its quality, the dairyman would have despised, as a practical man, yet which was based upon a more stubborn and resistless tendency than a whole heap of so-called practicalities. A veil had been whisked aside; the tract of each one's outlook was to have a new horizon thenceforward—for a short time or for a long.

"MY MANY WANDERINGS WERE OVER"<sup>1</sup>

*William Hale White* (1830)

From time to time I received a newspaper from my native town, and one morning, looking over the advertise-

<sup>1</sup> From *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance*: Mark Rutherford is the pseudonym of William Hale White.

ments, I caught sight of one which arrested me. It was as follows:

"A Widow Lady desires a situation as Daily Governess to little children. Address E. B., care of Mrs. George Andrews, Fancy Bazaar, High Street."

Mrs. George Andrews was a cousin of Ellen Butts, and that this was her advertisement I had not the slightest doubt. Suddenly, without being able to give the least reason for it, an unconquerable desire to see her arose within me. I could not understand it. What *was* it which prompted this inexplicable emotion? A thousand things rushed through my head without reason or order. I begin to believe that a first love never dies. A boy falls in love at eighteen or nineteen. The attachment comes to nothing. It is broken off for a multitude of reasons, and he sees its absurdity. He marries afterward some other woman whom he even adores, and he has children for whom he spends his life; yet in an obscure corner of his soul he preserves everlastingly the cherished picture of the girl who first was dear to him. She, too, marries. In process of time she is fifty years old, and he is fifty-two. He has not seen her for thirty years or more, but he continually turns aside into the little oratory, to gaze upon the face as it last appeared to him when he left her at the gate and saw her no more. He inquires now and then timidly about her whenever he gets the chance. And once in his life he goes down to the town where she lives, solely in order to get a sight of her without her knowing anything about it. He does not succeed, and he comes back and tells his wife, from whom he never conceals any secrets, that he has been away on business. I did not for a moment confess that my love for Ellen had returned. I knew who she was and what she was, and what had led to our separation; but, nevertheless, all this obstinately remained



in the background, and, all the passages of love between us, all our kisses, and, above everything, her tears at that parting in her father's house, thrust themselves upon me. It was a mystery to me. What should have induced that utterly unexpected resurrection of what I believed to be dead and buried is beyond my comprehension. However, the fact remains. I did not to myself admit that this was love, but it *was* love, and that it should have shot up with such swift vitality merely because I had happened to see those initials was miraculous. I pretended to myself that I should like once more to see Mrs. Butts—perhaps she might be in want, and I could help her. I shrank from writing to her, or from making myself known to her, and at last I hit upon the expedient of answering her advertisement in a feigned name, and requesting her to call at the King's Arms hotel upon a gentleman who wished to engage a widow lady to teach his children. To prevent any previous inquiries on her part, I said that my name was Williams, that I lived in the country at some little distance from the town, but that I should be there on business on the day named. I took up my quarters at the King's Arms the night before. It seemed very strange to be in an inn in the place in which I was born. I retired early to my bedroom, and looked out in the clear moonlight over the river. The landscape seemed haunted by ghosts of my former self. At one particular point, so well known, I stood fishing. At another, equally well known, where the water was dangerously deep, I was examining the ice; and round the corner was the boathouse where we kept the little craft in which I had voyaged so many hundreds of miles on excursions upward beyond where the navigation ends, or, still more fascinating, down to where the water widens and sails are to be seen, and there is a foretaste of the distant sea. It is no pleasure to me to revisit

scenes in which earlier days have been passed. I detest the sentimental melancholy which steals over me; the sense of the lapse of time, and the reflection that so many whom I knew are dead. I would always, if possible, spend my holiday in some new scene, fresh to me, and full of new interest. I slept but little, and when the morning came, instead of carrying out my purpose of wandering through the streets, I was so sick of the mood by which I had been helplessly overcome that I sat at a distance from the window in the coffee-room, and read diligently last week's *Bell's Weekly Messenger*. My reading, however, was nothing. I do not suppose I comprehended the simplest paragraph. My thoughts were away, and I watched the clock slowly turning toward the hour when Ellen was to call. I foresaw that I should not be able to speak to her at the inn. If I have anything particular to say to anybody, I can always say it so much better out-of-doors. I dreaded the confinement of the room, and the necessity for looking into her face. Under the sky, and in motion, I should be more at liberty. At last eleven struck from the church in the square, and five minutes afterward the waiter entered to announce Mrs. Butts. I was, therefore, right, and she was "E. B." I was sure that I should not be recognized. Since I saw her last I had grown a beard, my hair had got a little gray, and she was always a little short-sighted. She came in, and as she entered she put away over her bonnet her thick black veil. Not ten seconds passed before she was seated on the opposite side of the table to that on which I was sitting, but I reread in her during those ten seconds the whole history of years. I cannot say that externally she looked worn or broken. I had imagined that I should see her undone with her great troubles; but to some extent, and yet not altogether, I was mistaken. The cheek-bones were more prominent than of old, and

her dark-brown hair drawn tightly over her forehead increased the clear paleness of the face; the just-perceptible tint of color which I recollect being now altogether withdrawn. But she was not haggard, and evidently not vanquished. There was even a gayety on her face, perhaps a trifle enforced, and although the darkness of sorrow gleamed behind it, the sorrow did not seem to be ultimate, but to be in front of a final background, if not of joy, at least of resignation. Her ancient levity of manner had vanished, or at most had left nothing but a trace. I thought I detected it here and there in a line about the mouth, and perhaps in her walk. There was a reminiscence of it too in her clothes. Notwithstanding poverty and distress, the old neatness—that particular care which used to charm me so when I was little more than a child—was there still. I was always susceptible to this virtue, and delicate hands and feet, with delicate care bestowed thereon, were more attractive to me than slovenly beauty. I noticed that the gloves, though mended, fitted with the same precision, and that her dress was unwrinkled and perfectly graceful. Whatever she might have had to endure, it had not destroyed that self-centred satisfaction which makes life tolerable.

I was impelled at once to say that I had to beg her pardon for asking her there. Unfortunately, I was obliged to go over to Cowston, a village which was about three miles from the town. Perhaps she would not mind walking part of the way with me through the meadows, and then we could talk with more freedom, as I should not feel pressed for time. To this arrangement she at once agreed, and, dropping her thick veil over her face, we went out. In a few minutes we were clear of the houses, and I began the conversation:

“Have you been in the habit of teaching?”

"No. The necessity for taking to it has only lately arisen."

"What can you teach?"

"Not much beyond what children of ten or eleven years old are expected to know; but I could take charge of them entirely."

"Have you any children of your own?"

"One."

"Could you take a situation as resident teacher if you have a child?"

"I must get something to do, and if I can make no arrangement by which my child can live with me, I shall try and place her with a friend. I may be able to hear of some appointment as a daily governess."

"I should have thought that in your native town you would have been easily able to find employment—you must be well known?"

There was a pause, and after a moment or so she said:

"We were well known once, but we went abroad and lost all our money. My husband died abroad. When I returned I found that there was little which my friends could do for me. I am not accomplished, and there are crowds of young women who are more capable than I am. Moreover, I saw that I was becoming a burden, and people called on me rather as a matter of duty than for any other reason. You don't know how soon all but the very best insensibly neglect very poor relatives if they are not gifted or attractive. I do not wonder at being made to feel this, nor do I blame anybody. My little girl is a cripple, my rooms are dull, and I have nothing in me with which to amuse or entertain visitors. Pardon my going into this detail. It was necessary to say something in order to explain my position."

"May I ask what salary you will require if you live in the house?"

"Five-and-thirty pounds a year; but I might take less if I were asked to do so."

"Are you a member of the Church of England?"

"No."

"To what religious body do you belong?"

"I am an Independent; but I would go to church if my employers wished it."

"I thought the Independents objected to go to church?"

"They do; but I should not object, if I could hear anything at the church which would help me."

"I am rather surprised at your indifference."

"I was once more particular, but I have seen much suffering, and some things which were important to me are not so now, and others which were not important have become so."

I then made up a little story. My sister and I lived together. We were about to take up our abode at Cowston, but were as yet strangers to it. I was left a widower with two little children whom my sister could not educate, as she could not spare the time. She would naturally have selected the governess herself, but she was at some distance. She would like to see Mrs. Butts before engaging her finally, but she thought that as this advertisement presented itself, I might make some preliminary inquiries. Perhaps, however, now that Mrs. Butts knew the facts, she would object to living in the house. I put it in this way, feeling sure that she would catch my meaning.

"I am afraid that this situation will not suit me. I could not go backward and forward so far every day."

"I understand you perfectly, and feared that this would be your decision. But if you hesitate, I can give you the best of references. I had not thought of that before."

References, of course, will be required by you as well as by me."

I put my hand in my pocket for my pocket-book, but I could not find it. We had now reached a part of our road familiar enough to both of us. Along that very path Ellen and I had walked years ago. Under those very trees, on that very seat had we sat, and she and I were there again. All the old confidences, confessions, tenderesses, rushed upon me. What is there which is more potent than the recollection of past love to move us to love, and knit love with closest bonds? Can we ever cease to love the souls who have once shared all that we know and feel? Can we ever be indifferent to those who have our secrets, and whose secrets we hold? As I looked at her, I remembered what she knew about me, and what I knew about her, and this simple thought so overmastered me that I could hold out no longer. I said to her that if she would like to rest for one moment, I might be able to find my papers. We sat down together, and she drew up her veil to read the address which I was about to give her. She glanced at me, as I thought, with a strange expression of excited interrogation, and something swiftly passed across her face which warned me that I had not a moment to lose. I took out one of my own cards, handed it to her, and said, "Here is a reference which perhaps you may know." She bent over it, turned to me, fixed her eyes intently and directly on mine for one moment, and then I thought she would have fallen. My arm was around her in an instant, her head was on my shoulder, and my many wanderings were over. It was broad, high, sunny noon, the most solitary hour of the daylight in those fields. We were roused by the distant sound of the town clock striking twelve; we rose and went on together to Cowston by the river bank, returning late in the evening.



### III

## Historic Personages



**James I.**

*Sir Walter Scott* (1771-1832)

**Henry VIII., Wolsey, and Anne Boleyn.**

*Harrison Ainsworth* (1805-1882)

**The Duke of Marlborough.**

*William Makepeace Thackeray* (1811-1863)

**Eighteenth-Century Celebrities.**

*William Makepeace Thackeray* (1811-1863)

**Rachel, the Actress.**

*Charlotte Brontë* (1816-1855)

**How Hereward Played the Potter.**

*Charles Kingsley* (1819-1875)

**Savonarola.**

*George Eliot* (1819-1880)

**Judge Jeffreys.**

*R. D. Blackmore* (1825-1900)

**The Murder of Rizzio.**

*Maurice Hewlett* (1861)

## JAMES I.<sup>1</sup>

*Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832)*

THE scene of confusion amid which he found the King seated was no bad picture of the state and quality of James's own mind. There was much that was rich and costly in cabinet pictures and valuable ornaments; but they were arranged in a slovenly manner, covered with dust, and lost half their value, or at least their effect, from the manner in which they were presented to the eye. The table was loaded with huge folios, among which lay light books of jest and ribaldry; and among notes of unmercifully long orations and essays on king-craft were mingled miserable roundels and ballads by the Royal 'Prentice, as he styled himself, in the art of poetry, and schemes for the general pacification of Europe, with a list of the names of the King's hounds, and remedies against canine madness.

His Majesty's dress was of green velvet, quilted so full as to be dagger-proof, which gave him the appearance of clumsy and ungainly protuberance; while its being buttoned awry communicated to his figure an air of distortion. Over his green doublet he wore a sad-colored nightgown, out of the pocket of which peeped his hunting-horn. His high-crowned gray hat lay on the floor, covered with dust, but encircled by a carcanet of large balas rubies; and he wore a blue velvet nightcap, in the front of which was

<sup>1</sup> From *The Fortunes of Nigel*.

placed the plume of a heron, which had been struck down by a favorite hawk in some critical moment of the flight, in remembrance of which the King wore this highly honored feather.

But such inconsistencies in dress and appointments were mere outward types of those which existed in the royal character, rendering it a subject of doubt among his contemporaries, and bequeathing it as a problem to future historians. He was deeply learned, without possessing useful knowledge; sagacious in many individual cases, without having real wisdom; fond of his power, and desirous to maintain and augment it, yet willing to resign the direction of that, and of himself, to the most unworthy favorites; a big and bold assertor of his rights in words, yet one who tamely saw them trampled on in deeds; a lover of negotiations, in which he was always outwitted; and one who feared war, where conquest might have been easy. He was fond of his dignity, while he was perpetually degrading it by undue familiarity; capable of much public labor, yet often neglecting it for the meanest amusement; a wit, though a pedant; and a scholar, though fond of the conversation of the ignorant and uneducated. Even his timidity of temper was not uniform; and there were moments of his life, and those critical, in which he showed the spirit of his ancestors. He was laborious in trifles, and a trifler where serious labor was required; devout in his sentiments, and yet too often profane in his language; just and beneficent by nature, he yet gave way to the iniquities and oppression of others. He was penurious respecting money which he had to give from his own hand, yet inconsiderately and unboundedly profuse of that which he did not see. In a word, those good qualities which displayed themselves in particular cases and occasions were not of a nature sufficiently firm and comprehensive to

regulate his general conduct; and, showing themselves as they occasionally did, only entitled James to the character bestowed on him by Sully: that he was the wisest fool in Christendom.

That the fortunes of this monarch might be as little of a piece as his character, he, certainly the least able of the Stewarts, succeeded peaceably to that kingdom against the power of which his predecessors had, with so much difficulty, defended his native throne; and, lastly, although his reign appeared calculated to insure to Great Britain that lasting tranquillity and internal peace which so much suited the King's disposition, yet, during that very reign were sown those seeds of dissension which, like the teeth of the fabulous dragon, had their harvest in a bloody and universal civil war.

Such was the monarch who, saluting Heriot by the name of Jingling Geordie, for it was his well-known custom to give nicknames to all those with whom he was on terms of familiarity, inquired "What new clatter-traps he had brought with him, to cheat his lawful and native prince out of his siller."

"God forbid, my liege," said the citizen, "that I should have any such disloyal purpose. I did but bring a piece of plate to show to your most gracious Majesty, which, both for the subject and for the workmanship, I were loth to put into the hands of any subject until I knew your Majesty's pleasure anent it."

"Body o' me, man, let's see it, Heriot; though, by my saul, Steenie's service o' plate was sae dear a bargain, I had 'maist pawned my word as a royal king to keep my ain gold and silver in future, and let you, Geordie, keep yours."

"Respecting the Duke of Buckingham's plate," said the goldsmith, "your Majesty was pleased to direct that no expense should be spared, and—"

"What signifies what I desired, man? When a wise man is with fules and bairns, he maun e'en play at the chucks. But you should have had mair sense and consideration than to gie Baby Charles and Steenie their ain gate; they wad hae floored the very rooms wi' silver, and I wonder they didna."

George Heriot bowed and said no more. He knew his master too well to vindicate himself otherwise than by a distant allusion to his order; and James, with whom economy was only a transient and momentary twinge of conscience, became immediately afterward desirous to see the piece of plate which the goldsmith proposed to exhibit, and despatched Maxwell to bring it to his presence. In the mean time he demanded of the citizen whence he had procured it.

"From Italy, may it please your Majesty," replied Heriot.

"It has naething in it tending to Papestrie?" said the King, looking graver than his wont.

"Surely not, please your Majesty," said Heriot; "I were not wise to bring anything to your presence that had the mark of the beast."

"You would be the mair beast yourself to do so," said the King; "it is well kend that I wrestled wi' Dagon in my youth, and smote him on the groundsill of his own temple—a gude evidence that I should be in time called, however unworthy, the Defender of the Faith. But here comes Maxwell, bending under his burden, like the golden ass of Apuleius."

Heriot hastened to relieve the usher, and to place the embossed salver, for such it was, and of extraordinary dimensions, in a light favorable for his Majesty's viewing the sculpture.

"Saul of my body, man," said the King, "it is a curious

piece, and, as I think, fit for a king's chalmer; and the subject, as you say, Master George, vera adequate and beseeing, being, as I see, the judgment of Solomon—a prince in whose paths it weel becomes a' leeving monarchs to walk with emulation."

"But whose footsteps," said Maxwell, "only one of them—if a subject may say so much—hath ever overtaken."

"Haud your tongue for a fause fleeching loon!" said the King, but with a smile on his face that showed the flattery had done its part. "Look at the bonny piece of workmanship, and haud your clavering tongue. And whase handiwork may it be, Geordie?"

"It was wrought, sir," replied the goldsmith, "by the famous Florentine, Benvenuto Cellini, and designed for Francis the First of France; but I hope it will find a fitter master."

"Francis of France!" said the King; "send Solomon, king of the Jews, to Francis of France! Body of me, man, it would have kythed Cellini mad, had he never done onything else out of the gate. Francis! Why, he was a fighting fule, man—a mere fighting fule; got himsell ta'en at Pavia, like our ain David at Durham lang syne; if they could hae sent him Solomon's wit, and love of peace, and godliness, they wad hae dune him a better turn. But Solomon should sit in other gate company than Francis of France."

"I trust that such will be his good fortune," said Heriot.

"It is a curious and vera artificial sculpture," said the King, in continuation; "but yet, methinks, the carnifex, or executioner, there is brandishing his gulley ower near the king's face, seeing he is within reach of his weapon. I think less wisdom than Solomon's wad have taught him that there was danger in edge-tools, and that he wad have

bidden the smaik either sheath his shabble or stand farther back."

George Heriot endeavored to alleviate this objection by assuring the King that the vicinity betwixt Solomon and the executioner was nearer in appearance than in reality, and that the perspective should be allowed for.

"Gang to the deil wi' your prospective, man," said the King; "there canna be a waur prospective for a lawfu' king, wha wishes to reign in lue, and die in peace and honor, than to have naked swords flashing in his een. I am accounted as brave as maist folks; and yet I profess to ye I could never look on a bare blade without blinking and winking. But a'thegither it is a brave piece; and what is the price of it, man?"

The goldsmith replied by observing that it was not his own property, but that of a distressed countryman.

"Whilk you mean to mak your excuse for asking the double of its worth, I warrant?" answered the King. "I ken the tricks of you burrows-town merchants, man."

"I have no hopes of baffling your Majesty's sagacity," said Heriot; "the piece is really what I say, and the price a hundred and fifty pounds sterling, if it pleases your Majesty to make present payment."

"A hundred and fifty pounds, man! and as mony witches and warlocks to raise them!" said the irritated monarch. "My saul, Jingling Geordie, ye are minded that your purse shall jingle to a bonny tune! How am I to tell you down a hundred and fifty pounds for what will not weigh as many merks? and ye ken that my very household servitors, and the officers of my mouth, are sax months in arrear!"

The goldsmith stood his ground against all this objurgation, being what he was well accustomed to, and only answered, that if his Majesty liked the piece, and desired to possess it, the price could be easily settled. It was true

that the party required the money, but he, George Heriot, would advance it on his Majesty's account, if such were his pleasure, and wait his royal conveniency for payment, for that and other matters; the money, meanwhile, lying at the ordinary usage.

"By my honor," said James, "and that is speaking like an honest and reasonable tradesman. We maun get another subsidy frae the Commons, and that will make ae compting of it. Awa' wi' it, Maxwell—awa' wi' it, and let it be set where Steenie and Baby Charles shall see it as they return from Richmond."

## HENRY VIII., WOLSEY, AND ANNE BOLEYN<sup>1</sup>

*Harrison Ainsworth (1805-1882)*

The concourse assembled on Datchet Bridge welcomed Anne Boleyn's arrival with loud acclamations, while joyous strains proceeded from sackbut and psaltery, and echoing blasts from the trumpets. Caps were flung into the air, and a piece of ordnance was fired from the barge, which was presently afterward answered by the castle guns. Having paid his homage to Anne Boleyn, the mayor rejoined the company of bailiffs and burgesses, and the whole cavalcade crossed the bridge, winding their way slowly along the banks of the river, the barge, with the minstrels playing in it, accompanying them the while. In this way they reached Windsor, and as Anne Boleyn gazed up at the lordly castle, above which the royal standard now floated, proud and aspiring thoughts swelled her heart, and she longed for the hour when she should approach it as its mistress. Just then her eye chanced on Sir Thomas

<sup>1</sup> From *Windsor Castle*.



Wyat, who was riding behind her amongst the knights, and she felt, though it might cost her a struggle, that love would yield to ambition.

Leaving the barge and its occupants to await the king's arrival, the cavalcade ascended Thames Street, and were welcomed everywhere with acclamations and rejoicing. Bryan Bowntance, who had stationed himself on the right of the arch in front of his house, attempted to address Anne Boleyn, but could not bring forth a word. His failure, however, was more successful than his speech might have been, inasmuch as it excited abundance of merriment.

Arrived at the area in front of the lower gateway, Anne Boleyn's litter was drawn up in the midst of it, and the whole of the cavalcade grouping around her presented a magnificent sight to the archers and arquebusiers stationed on the towers and walls.

Just at this moment a signal gun was heard from Datchet Bridge, announcing that the king had reached it, and the Dukes of Suffolk, Norfolk, and Richmond, together with the Earl of Surrey, Sir Thomas Wyatt, and a few of their gentlemen, rode back to meet him. They had scarcely, however, reached the foot of the hill when the royal party appeared in view, for the king, with his characteristic impatience, on drawing near the castle, had urged his attendants quickly forward.

First came half a dozen trumpeters, with silken bandrols fluttering in the breeze, blowing loud flourishes. Then a party of halberdiers, whose leaders had pennons streaming from the tops of their tall pikes. Next came two gentlemen-ushers bareheaded, but mounted and richly habited, belonging to the cardinal of York, who cried out, as they pressed forward: "On before, my masters, on before!—make way for my lord's grace."

Then came a sergeant of arms bearing a great mace of

silver, and two gentlemen carrying each a pillar of silver. Next rode a gentleman carrying the cardinal's hat, and after him came Wolsey himself, mounted on a mule trapped in crimson velvet, with a saddle covered with the same stuff, and gilt stirrups. His large person was arrayed in robes of the finest crimson satin engrained, and a silk cap of the same color contrasted by its brightness with the pale, purple tint of his sullen, morose, and bloated features. The cardinal took no notice of the clamor around him, but now and then, when an expression of dislike was uttered against him, for he had already begun to be unpopular with the people, he would raise his eyes and direct a withering glance at the hardy speaker. But these expressions were few, for, though tottering, Wolsey was yet too formidable to be insulted with impunity. On either side of him were two mounted attendants, each carrying a gilt pole-axe, who, if he had given the word, would have instantly chastised the insolence of the bystanders; while behind him rode his two cross-bearers, upon horses trapped in scarlet.

Wolsey's princely retinue was followed by a litter of crimson velvet, in which lay the Pope's legate, Cardinal Campeggio, whose infirmities were so great that he could not move without assistance. Campeggio was likewise attended by a numerous train.

After a long line of lords, knights, and esquires came Henry the Eighth. He was apparelled in a robe of crimson velvet furred with ermines, and wore a doublet of raised gold, the placard of which was embroidered with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, large pearls, and other precious stones. About his neck was a baldric of balas rubies, and over his robe he wore the collar of the order of the Garter. His horse, a charger of the largest size, and well able to sustain his vast weight, was trapped in

crimson velvet purpled with ermines. His knights and esquires were clothed in purple velvet, and his henchmen in scarlet tunics of the same make as those worn by the warders of the Tower at the present day.

Henry was in his thirty-eighth year, and though somewhat overgrown and heavy, had lost none of his activity, and but little of the grace of his noble proportions. His size and breadth of limb were well displayed in his magnificent habiliments. His countenance was handsome and manly, with a certain broad, burly look, thoroughly English in its character, which won him much admiration from his subjects; and though it might be objected that the eyes were too small, and the mouth somewhat too diminutive, it could not be denied that the general expression of the face was kingly in the extreme. A prince of a more "royal presence" than Henry the Eighth was never seen, and though he had many and grave faults, want of dignity was not amongst the number.

Henry entered Windsor amid the acclamations of the spectators, the fanfares of trumpeters, and the roar of ordnance from the castle walls.

### THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH<sup>1</sup>

*William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863)*

Our chief, whom England and all Europe, saving only the Frenchmen, worshipped almost, had this of the god-like in him, that he was impassable before victory, before danger, before defeat. Before the greatest obstacle or the most trivial ceremony; before a hundred thousand men drawn in battalia, or a peasant slaughtered at the door of

<sup>1</sup> From *Henry Esmond*.

his burning hovel; before a carouse of drunken German lords, or a monarch's court, or a cottage table where his plans were laid, or an enemy's battery, vomiting flame and death, and strewing corpses round about him—he was always cold, calm, resolute, like fate. He performed a treason or a court-bow, he told a falsehood as black as Styx, as easily as he paid a compliment or spoke about the weather. He took a mistress, and left her; he betrayed his benefactor, and supported him, or would have murdered him, with the same calmness always, and having no more remorse than Clotho when she weaves the thread, or Lachesis when she cuts it. In the hour of battle, I have heard the Prince of Savoy's officers say, the Prince became possessed with a sort of warlike fury; his eyes lighted up; he rushed hither and thither, raging; he shrieked curses and encouragement, yelling and harking his bloody war-dogs on, and himself always at the first of the hunt. Our Duke was as calm at the mouth of the cannon as at the door of a drawing-room. Perhaps he could not have been the great man he was had he had a heart either for love or hatred, or pity or fear, or regret or remorse. He achieved the highest deed of daring, or deepest calculation of thought, as he performed the very meanest action of which a man is capable; told a lie, or cheated a fond woman, or robbed a poor beggar of a halfpenny, with a like awful serenity and equal capacity of the highest and lowest acts of our nature.

His qualities were pretty well known in the army, where there were parties of all politics, and of plenty of shrewdness and wit; but there existed such a perfect confidence in him, as the first captain of the world, and such a faith and admiration in his prodigious genius and fortune, that the very men whom he notoriously cheated of their pay, the chiefs whom he used and injured—for he used all men, great and small, that came near him, as his instruments

alike, and took something of theirs, either some quality or some property—the blood of a soldier, it might be, or a jewelled hat, or a hundred thousand crowns from a king, or a portion out of a starving sentinel's three-farthings; or (when he was young) a kiss from a woman, and the gold chain off her neck, taking all he could from woman or man, and having, as I have said, this of the godlike in him, that he could see a hero perish or a sparrow fall, with the same amount of sympathy for either. Not that he had no tears; he could always order up this reserve at the proper moment to battle; he could draw upon tears or smiles alike, and whenever need was for using this cheap coin. He would cringe to a shoeblack, as he would flatter a minister or a monarch; be haughty, be humble, threaten, repent, weep, grasp your hand (or stab you whenever he saw occasion). But yet those of the army, who knew him best and had suffered most from him, admired him most of all; and as he rode along the lines to battle or galloped up in the nick of time to a battalion reeling from before the enemy's charge or shot, the fainting men and officers got new courage as they saw the splendid calm of his face, and felt that his will made them irresistible.

#### EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CELEBRITIES<sup>1</sup>

*William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863)*

[Harry Warrington, newly landed in England from Virginia, is at the fashionable resort of Tunbridge Wells. His companions are Lord March, Jack Morris, and Colonel Wolfe, the future hero of Quebec.]

The four gentlemen now strolled out of the tavern garden into the public walk, where, by this time, a great deal

<sup>1</sup> From *The Virginians*.

of company was assembled; upon whom Mr. Jack, who was of a frank and free nature, with a loud voice, chose to make remarks that were not always agreeable. And here, if my Lord March made a joke, of which his Lordship was not sparing, Jack roared, "Oh, ho, ho! Oh, good Gad! Oh, my dear Earl! Oh, my dear Lord, you'll be the death of me!" "It seemed as if he wished everybody to know," writes Harry sagaciously to Mrs. Mountain, "that his friend and companion was *an Earl!*"

There was, indeed, a great variety of characters who passed. M. Poellnitz, no finer dressed than he had been at dinner, grinned, and saluted with his great laced hat and tarnished feathers. Then came by my Lord Chesterfield, in a pearl-colored suit, with his blue ribbon and star, and saluted the young men in his turn.

"I will back the old boy for taking his hat off against the whole kingdom, and France, either," says my Lord March. "He has never changed the shape of that hat of his for twenty years. Look at it. There it goes again! Do you see that great big, awkward, pock-marked, snuff-colored man, who hardly touches his clumsy beaver in reply. D—— his confounded impudence—do you know who that is?"

"No, curse him! Who is it, March?" asks Jack, with an oath.

"It's one Johnson, a dictionary-maker, about whom my Lord Chesterfield wrote some most capital papers, when his dictionary was coming out, to patronize the fellow. I know they were capital. I've heard Horry Walpole say so, and he knows all about that kind of thing. Confound the impudent schoolmaster!"

"Hang him, he ought to stand in the pillory!" roars Jack.

"That fat man he's walking with is another of your

writing fellows—a printer—his name is Richardson; he wrote *Clarissa*, you know.”

“Great Heavens! my Lord, is that the great Richardson? Is that the man who wrote *Clarissa*?” called out Colonel Wolfe and Mr. Warrington, in a breath.

Harry ran forward to look at the old gentleman toddling along the walk with a train of admiring ladies surrounding him.

“Indeed, my very dear sir,” one was saying, “you are too great and good to live in such a world; but sure you were sent to teach it virtue!”

“Ah, my Miss Mulso! Who shall teach the teacher?” said the good, fat old man, raising a kind, round face skyward. “Even he has his faults and errors! Even his age and experience does not prevent him from stumbl—Heaven bless my soul, Mr. Johnson! I ask your pardon if I have trodden on your corn.”

“You have done both, sir. You have trodden on the corn, and received the pardon,” said Mr. Johnson, and went on mumbling some verses, swaying to and fro, his eyes turned toward the ground, his hands behind him, and occasionally endangering with his great stick the honest, meek eyes of his companion author.

“They do not see very well, my dear Mulso,” he says to the young lady, “but such as they are, I would keep my *lash* from Mr. Johnson’s cudgel. Your servant, sir.” Here he made a low bow, and took off his hat to Mr. Warrington, who shrank back with many blushes, after saluting the great author. The great author was accustomed to be adored. A gentler wind never puffed mortal vanity. Enraptured spinsters flung tea-leaves round him, and incensed him with the coffee-pot. Matrons kissed the slippers they had worked for him. There was a halo of virtue round his night-cap. All Europe had thrilled,

panted, admired, trembled, wept over the pages of the immortal little kind, honest man with the round paunch. Harry came back quite glowing and proud at having a bow from him. "Ah!" says he, "my Lord, I am glad to have seen him!"

"Seen him! why, dammy, you may see him any day in his shop, I suppose?" says Jack, with a laugh.

"My brother declared that he, and Mr. Fielding, I think was the name, were the greatest geniuses in England; and often used to say, that when we came to Europe his first pilgrimage would be to Mr. Richardson," cried Harry, always impetuous, honest, and tender when he spoke of the dearest friend.

"Your brother spoke like a man," cried Mr. Wolfe, his pale face likewise flushing up. "I would rather be a man of genius than a peer of the realm."

"Every man to his taste, Colonel," says my Lord, much amused. "Your enthusiasm—I don't mean anything personal—refreshes me; on my honor it does."

"So it does me—by gad—perfectly refreshes me," cries Jack.

"So it does Jack—you see—it actually refreshes Jack! I say, Jack, which would you rather be?—a fat old printer, who has written a story about a confounded girl and a fellow that ruins her—or a peer of Parliament with ten thousand a year?"

"March—my Lord March, do you take me for a fool?" says Jack, with a tearful voice. "Have I done anything to deserve this language from you?"

"I would rather win honor than honors; I would rather have genius than wealth. I would rather make my name than inherit it, though my father's, thank God, is an honest one," said the young Colonel. "But, pardon me, gentlemen!" And here, making them a hasty salutation, he ran



across the parade toward a young and elderly lady and a gentleman, who were now advancing.

"It is the beautiful Miss Lowther. I remember now," says my Lord. "See! he takes her arm! The report is, he is engaged to her."

"You don't mean to say such a fellow is engaged to any of the Lowthers of the North?" cries out Jack. "Curse me, what is the world come to, with your printers, and your half-pay ensigns, and your schoolmasters, and your infernal nonsense?"

The dictionary-maker, who had shown so little desire to bow to my Lord Chesterfield when that famous nobleman courteously saluted him, was here seen to take off his beaver, and bow almost to the ground before a florid personage in a large round hat, with bands and a gown, who made his appearance in the Walk. This was my Lord Bishop of Salisbury, wearing complacently the blue riband and badge of the Garter, of which noble order his Lordship was prelate.

Mr. Johnson stood, hat in hand, during the whole time of his conversation with Doctor Gilbert, who made many flattering and benedictory remarks to Mr. Richardson, declaring that he was the supporter of virtue, the preacher of sound morals, the mainstay of religion, of all which points the honest printer himself was perfectly convinced.

Do not let any young lady trip to her grandpapa's bookcase in consequence of this eulogium and rashly take down *Clarissa* from the shelf. She would not care to read the volumes, over which her pretty ancestresses wept and thrilled a hundred years ago; which were commended by divines from pulpits and belauded all Europe over. I wonder, are our women more virtuous than their grandmothers, or only more squeamish? If the former, then Miss Smith of New York is certainly more modest than Miss Smith of

London, who still does not scruple to say that tables, pianos, and animals have legs. Oh, my faithful, good old Samuel Richardson! Hath the news yet reached thee in hades that thy sublime novels are huddled away in corners, and that our daughters may no more read *Clarissa* than *Tom Jones*? Go up, Samuel, and be reconciled with thy brother scribe, whom in life thou didst hate so. I wonder whether a century hence the novels of to-day will be hidden behind locks and wires, and make pretty little maid-ens blush?

### RACHEL, THE ACTRESS<sup>1</sup>

*Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)*

[Charlotte Brontë saw Rachel act during her residence in Brussels, and describes her under the name of Vashti.]

The theatre was full—crammed to its roof; royal and noble were there: palace and hotel had emptied their inmates into those tiers so thronged and so hushed. Deeply did I feel myself privileged in having a place before that stage; I longed to see a being of whose powers I had heard reports which made me conceive peculiar anticipations. I wondered if she would justify her renown. With strange curiosity, with feelings severe and austere, yet of riveted interest, I waited. She was a study of such nature as had not encountered my eyes yet: a great and new planet she was; but in what shape? I waited her rising.

She rose at nine that December night; above the horizon I saw her come. She could shine yet with pale grandeur and steady might; but that star verged already on its judgment-day. Seen near, it was a chaos—hollow, half-

<sup>1</sup> From *Villette*.

consumed: an orb perished or perishing—half lava, half glow.

I had heard this woman termed "plain," and I expected bony harshness and grimness—something large, angular, sallow. What I saw was the shadow of a royal Vashti: a queen, fair as the day once, turned pale now like twilight, and wasted like wax in flame.

For a while—a long while—I thought it was only a woman, though a unique woman, who moved in might and grace before this multitude. By-and-by I recognized my mistake. Behold! I found upon her something neither of woman nor of man: in each of her eyes sat a devil. These evil forces bore her through the tragedy, kept up her feeble strength—for she was but a frail creature; and as the action rose and the stir deepened, how wildly they shook her with their passions of the pit! They wrote HELL on her straight, haughty brow. They tuned her voice to the note of torment. They writhed her regal face to a demoniac mask. Hate and Murder and Madness incarnate she stood.

It was a marvellous sight: a mighty revelation.

It was a spectacle low, horrible, immoral.

Swordsmen thrust through, and dying in their blood on the arena sand; bulls goring horses disembowelled made a meeker vision for the public—a milder condiment for a people's palate—than Vashti torn by seven devils; devils which cried sore and rent the tenement they haunted, but still refused to be exorcised.

Suffering had struck that stage empress; and she stood before her audience neither yielding to, nor enduring, nor, in finite measure, resenting it: she stood locked in struggle, rigid in resistance. She stood, not dressed, but draped in pale antique folds, long and regular like sculpture. A background and entourage and flooring of deepest crimson threw her out white like alabaster—like silver; rather, be it said, like Death.

Where was the artist of the Cleopatra? Let him come and sit down and study this different vision. Let him seek here the mighty brawn, the muscle, the abounding blood, the full-fed flesh he worshipped: let all materialists draw nigh and look on.

I have said that she does not *resent* her grief. No; the weakness of that word would make it a lie. To her, what hurts becomes immediately embodied: she looks on it as a thing that can be attacked, worried down, torn in shreds. Scarcely a substance herself, she grapples to conflict with abstractions. Before calamity she is a tigress; she rends her woes, shivers them in compulsed abhorrence. Pain, for her, has no result in good; tears water no harvest of wisdom: on sickness, on death itself, she looks with the eye of a rebel. Wicked, perhaps, she is, but also she is strong: and her strength has conquered Beauty, has overcome Grace, and bound both at her side, captives peerlessly fair, and docile as fair. Even in the uttermost frenzy of energy is each mænad movement royally, imperially, incedingly upborne. Her hair, flying loose in revel or war, is still an angel's hair, and glorious under a halo. Fallen, insurgent, banished, she remembers the heaven where she rebelled. Heaven's light, following her exile, pierces its confines, and discloses their forlorn remoteness.

### HOW HEReward PLAYED THE POTTER<sup>1</sup>

*Charles Kingsley (1819-1875)*

[The English under Hereward are making their last stand against William the Conqueror on the Isle of Ely. Hereward goes forth to King William's court as a spy to gain information.]

<sup>1</sup> From *Hereward The Wake*.

They of Ely were now much straitened, being shut in both by land and water; and what was to be done, either by themselves or by the king, they knew not. Would William simply starve them; or at least inflict on them so perpetual a Lent—for of fish there could be no lack, even if they ate or drove away all the fowl—as would tame down their proud spirits; which a diet of fish and vegetables, from some ludicrous theory of monastic physicians was supposed to do? Or was he gathering vast armies, from they knew not whence, to try, once and for all, another assault on the island—it might be from several points at once?

They must send out a spy, and find out news from the outer world, if news were to be gotten. But who would go?

All begged Hereward to let any man go rather than himself.

“I am going, lords and knights; and what Hereward says he does. It is one day to Brandon. It may be two days back; for if I miscarry—as I most likely shall—I must come home round about. On the fourth day, you shall hear of me or from me. Come with me, Torfrida.”

And he strode out.

He cropped his golden locks, he cropped his golden beard; and Torfrida wept, as she cropped them, half with fear for him, half for sorrow over his shorn glories.

“I am no Samson, my lady; my strength lieth not in my locks. Now for some rascals’ clothes—as little dirty as you can get me, for fear of company.”

And Hereward put on filthy garments; and taking mare Swallow with him, got into a barge and went across the river to Soham.

He could not go down the Great Ouse, and up the Little Ouse, which was his easiest way, for the French held all the river below the isle; and, besides, to have come straight from Ely might cause suspicion. So he went down to

Fordham, and crossed the Lark at Mildenhall; and just before he got to Mildenhall he met a potter carrying pots upon a pony.

"Halt, my stout churl," quoth he, "and put thy pots on my mare's back."

"The man who wants them must fight for them," quoth that stout churl, raising a heavy staff.

"Then here is he that will," quoth Hereward; and, jumping off his mare, he twisted the staff out of the potter's hands, and knocked him down therewith.

"That will teach thee to know an Englishman when thou seest him."

"I have met my master," quoth the churl, rubbing his head. "But dog does not eat dog; and it is hard to be robbed by an Englishman, after being robbed a dozen times by the French."

"I will not rob thee. There is a silver penny for thy pots and thy coat—for that I must have likewise. And if thou tellest to mortal man aught about this, I will find those who will cut thee up for dogs' meat; but if not, then turn thy horse's head and ride back to Ely, if thou canst cross the water, and say what has befallen thee; and thou wilt find there an abbot who will give thee another penny for thy news."

So Hereward took the pots, and the potter's clay-greased coat, and went on through Mildenhall, "crying," saith the chronicler, "after the manner of potters, in the English tongue, 'Pots! pots! good pots and pans!'"

But when he got through Mildenhall, and well into the rabbit-warrens, he gave mare Swallow a kick, and went over the heath so fast northward that his pots danced such a dance as broke half of them before he got to Brandon.

"Never mind," quoth he, "they will think that I have sold them. And when he neared Brandon he pulled up,

sorted his pots, kept the whole ones, threw the shreds at the rabbits, and walked on into Brandon solemnly, leading the mare, and crying "Pots!"

So *semper marcida et deformis aspectu*—lean and ill-looking was that famous mare, says the chronicler, that no one would suspect her splendid powers, or take her for anything but a potter's nag, when she was caparisoned in proper character. Hereward felt thoroughly at home in his part; as able to play the Englishman which he was by roaring, as the Frenchman which he was by education. He was full of heart and happy. He enjoyed the keen, fresh air of the warrens; he enjoyed the ramble out of the isle, in which he had been cooped up so long; he enjoyed the jest of the thing—disguise, stratagem, adventure, danger. And so did the English, who adored him. None of The Wake's crafty deeds is told so carefully and lovingly; and none, doubt it not, was so often sung in after years by farm-house hearths, or in the outlaws' lodge, as this. Robin Hood himself may have trolled out, many a time, a doggerel strain how Hereward played the potter.

And he came to Brandon, to the "king's court," from which William could command the streams of Wissey and Little Ouse, with all their fens; and saw with a curse the new buildings of Weeting Castle.

These things The Wake saw: and felt, like others, hopeless for the moment. And there rang in his ears his own message to William: "When thou art king of all England, I will put my hands between thine, and be thy man."

"He is not king of all England yet!" thought he again; and drew himself up so proudly that one passing by jeered him—

"There goes a bold swaggerer enough, to be selling pots abroad." The Wake slouched his shoulders and looked

as mean a churl as ever. Next he cast about for a night's lodging, for it was dark.

Outside the town was a wretched cabin of mud and turf—such a one as Irish folk live in to this day; and Hereward said to himself, "This is bad enough to be good enough for me."

So he knocked at the door, and knocked till it was opened, and a hideous old crone put out her head.

"Who wants to see me at this time of night?"

"Any one would who had heard how beautiful you are. Do you want any pots?"

"Pots? What have I to do with pots, thou saucy fellow? I thought it was some one wanting a charm." And she shut the door.

"A charm?" thought Hereward. "Maybe she can tell me news, if she be a witch. They are shrewd souls, these witches, and know more than they tell. And if I can get any news, I care not if Satan brings it in person."

So he knocked again, till the old woman looked out once more, and bade him angrily be off.

"But I am belated here, good dame, and afraid of the French. And I will give thee the best bit of clay on my mare's back—pot—pan—panshin—crock—jug, or what thou wilt, for a night's lodging."

"Have you any little jars—jars no longer than my hand?" asked she; for she used them in her trade, and had broken one of late: but to pay for one she had neither money nor mind. So she agreed to let Hereward sleep there for the value of two jars. "But what of that ugly brute of a horse of thine?"

"She will do well enough in the turf-shed."

"Then thou must pay with a panshin."

"Ugh!" groaned Hereward; "thou drivest a hard bargain, for an Englishwoman, with a poor Englishman."



"How knowest thou that I am English?"

"So much the better if thou art not," thought Hereward; and bargained with her for a panshin against a lodging for the horse in the turf-house, and a bottle of bad hay.

Then he went in, bringing his panniers with him with ostentatious care.

"Thou canst sleep there on the rushes. I have naught to give thee to eat."

"Naught needs naught," said Hereward; and threw himself down on a bundle of rush, and in a few minutes snored loudly.

But he was never less asleep. He looked round the whole place; and he listened to every word.

The devil, as usual, was a bad paymaster; for the witch's cabin seemed only somewhat more miserable than that of other old women. The floor was mud, the rafters unceiled; the stars shone through the turf roof. The only hint of her trade was a hanging shelf, on which stood five or six little earthen jars, and a few packets of leaves. A parchment, scrawled with characters which the owner herself probably did not understand, hung against the cob wall; and a human skull—probably used only to frighten her patients—dangled from the roof-tree.

But in a corner, stuck against the wall, was something which chilled Hereward's blood a little—a dried human hand, which he knew must have been stolen off the gallows, gripping in its fleshless fingers a candle, which he knew was made of human fat. That candle, he knew, duly lighted and carried, would enable the witch to walk unseen into any house on earth, yea, through the court of King William himself, while it drowned all men in preternatural slumber.

Hereward was very much frightened. He believed devoutly in the powers of a witch.

So he trembled on his rushes, and wished himself safe through that adventure, without being turned into a hare or a wolf.

"I would sooner be a wolf than a hare, of course: but—who comes here?"

And to the first old crone, who sat winking her bleared eyes, and warming her bleared hands over a little heap of peat in the middle of the cabin, entered another crone, if possible uglier.

"Two of them! If I am not roasted and eaten this night, I am a lucky man."

And Hereward crossed himself devoutly.

He was recalled to business and common sense by hearing the two old hags talk to each other in French.

His heart leaped for joy.

"Well, how have you sped? Have you seen the king?"

"No; but Ivo Taillebois. Eh? Who the foul fiend have you lying there?"

"Only an English brute. He cannot understand us. Talk on: only don't wake the hog. Have you got the gold?"

"Never mind."

Then there was a grumbling and a quarrelling, from which Hereward understood that the gold was to be shared between them.

"But it is a bit of a chain. To cut it will spoil it."

The other insisted; and he heard them chop the gold chain in two.

"And is this all?"

"I had work enough to get that. He said, no play, no pay; and he would give it me after the isle was taken. But I told him my spirit was a Jewish spirit, that used to serve Solomon the Wise; and he would not serve me, much less come over the sea from Normandy, unless he smelt gold; for he loved it like any Jew."

"And what did you tell him then?"

"That the king must go back to Aldreth again; for only from thence would he take the isle; for—and that was true enough—I dreamt I saw all the water of Aldreth full of wolves, clambering over into the island on each other's backs."

"That means that some of them will be drowned."

"Let them drown. I left him to find out that part of the dream himself. Then I told him how he must make another causeway, bigger and stronger than the last, and a tower on which I could stand and curse the English. And I promised him to bring a storm right in the faces of the English, so that they could neither fight nor see."

"But if the storm does not come?"

"It will come. I know the signs of the sky—who better?—and the weather will break up in a week. Therefore I told him he must begin his works at once, before the rain came on; and that we would go and ask the guardian of the well to tell us the fortunate day for attacking."

"That is my business," said the other; "and my spirit likes the smell of gold as well as yours. Little you would have got from me if you had not given me half the chain."

Then the two rose.

"Let us see whether the English hog is asleep."

One of them came and listened to Hereward's breathing, and put her hand upon his chest. His hair stood on end; a cold sweat came over him. But he snored more loudly than ever.

The two old crones went out satisfied. Then Hereward rose, and glided after them.

They went down a meadow to a little well, which Hereward had marked as he rode thither hung round with bits

of rag and flowers, as similar "holy wells" are decorated in Ireland to this day.

He hid behind a hedge, and watched them stooping over the well, mumbling he knew not what of cantrips.

Then there was a silence, and a tinkling sound as of water.

"Once—twice—thrice," counted the witches. Nine times he counted the tinkling sound.

"The ninth day—the ninth day, and the king shall take Ely," said one in a cracked scream, rising and shaking her fists toward the isle.

Hereward was more than half minded to have put his dagger—the only weapon which he had—into the two old beldames. But the fear of an outcry kept him still. He had found out already so much that he was determined to find out more. So to-morrow he would go up to the court itself, and take what luck sent.

He slipped back to the cabin, and lay down again; and as soon as he had seen the two old crones safe asleep, fell asleep himself, and was so tired that he lay till the sun was high.

"Get up!" screamed the old dame at last, kicking him, "or I shall make you give me another crock for a double night's rest."

He paid his lodging, put the panniers on the mare, and went on, crying, "Pots!"

When he came to the outer gateway of the court he tied up the mare, and carried the crockery in on his own back, boldly. The scullions saw him, and called him into the kitchen, to see his crockery, without the least intention of paying for what they took.

A man of rank belonging to the court came in, and stared fixedly at Hereward.

"You are mightily like that villain Hereward, man," quoth he,

"Anon?" asked Hereward, looking as stupid as he could.

"If it were not for his brown face and his short hair, he is as like the fellow as a churl can be to a knight."

"Bring him into the hall," quoth another; "and let us see if any man knows him."

Into the great hall he was brought, and stared at by knights and squires. He bent his knees, rounded his shoulders, and made himself look as mean as he could.

Ivo Taillebois and Earl Warrenne came down and had a look at him.

"Hereward?" said Ivo. "I will warrant that little slouching cur is not he. Hereward must be half as big again, if it be true that he can kill a man with one blow of his fist."

"You may try the truth of that for yourself some day," thought Hereward.

"Does any one here talk English? Let us question the fellow," said Earl Warrenne.

"Hereward? Hereward? Who wants to know about that villain?" answered the potter, as soon as he was asked in English. "Would to heaven he were here, and I could see some of you noble knights and earls paying him for me; for I owe him more than ever I shall pay myself."

"What does he mean?"

"He came out of the isle ten days ago, nigh on to evening, and drove off a cow of mine and four sheep, which was all my living, noble knights, save these pots."

"And where is he since?"

"In the isle, my lords, well-nigh starved, and his folk falling away from him daily, from hunger and ague-fits. I doubt if there be a hundred sound men left in Ely."

"Have you been in thither, then, villain?"

"Heaven forbid! I in Ely? I in the wolf's den? If I went in with naught but my skin, they would have it off

me before I got out again. Ah, if your lordships would but come down, and make an end of him once for all; for he is a great tyrant, and terrible, and devours us poor folk like so many mites in his cheese."

"Take this babbler into the kitchen, and feed him," quoth Earl Warrenne; and so the colloquy ended.

Into the kitchen again the potter went. The king's luncheon was preparing; so he listened to the chatter; and picked up this at least, which was valuable to him: that the witches' story was true; that a great attack would be made from Aldreath: that boats had been ordered up the river to Cotinglade, and pioneers and entrenching tools were to be sent on that day to the old causeway.

But soon he had to take care of himself. Earl Warrenne's commands to feed him were construed by the cook-boys and scullions into a command to make him drunk likewise. To make a laughing-stock of an Englishman was too tempting a jest to be resisted; and Hereward was drenched (says the chronicler) with wine and beer, and sorely baited and badgered. At last one rascal hit upon a notable plan.

"Pluck out the English hog's hair and beard, and put him blindfold in the midst of his pots, and see what a smash we shall have."

Hereward pretended not to understand the words, which were spoken in French; but when they were interpreted to him, he grew somewhat red about the ears.

Submit he would not. But if he defended himself, and made an uproar in the "king's court," he might very likely find himself riding Odin's horse before the hour was out. However, happily for him, the wine and beer had made him stout of heart, and when one fellow laid hold of his beard, he resisted sturdily.

The man struck him, and that hard. Hereward, hot of

temper, and careless of life, struck him again, right under the ear.

The fellow dropped for dead.

Up leaped cook-boys, scullions, *lêcheurs* (who hung about the kitchen to *lêcher*, lick the platters), and all the foul-mouthed rascality of a great mediæval household, and attacked Hereward *cum furcis et tridentibus*, with forks and flesh-hooks.

Then was Hereward aware of a great broach, or spit, before the fire; and recollecting how he had used such a one as a boy against the monks of Peterborough, was minded to use it against the cooks of Brandon; which he did so heartily that in a few moments he had killed one, and driven the others backward in a heap.

But his case was hopeless. He was soon overpowered by numbers from outside, and dragged into the hall, to receive judgment for the mortal crime of slaying a man within the precincts of the court.

He kept up heart. He knew that the king was there; he knew that he should most likely get justice from the king. If not, he could but discover himself, and so save his life, for that William would kill willingly he did not believe.

So he went in boldly and willingly, and up the hall, where, on the dais, stood William the Norman.

William had finished his luncheon, and was standing at the board-side. A page held water in a silver basin, in which he was washing his hands. Two more knelt, and laced his long boots; for he was, as always, going a-hunting.

Then Hereward looked at the face of the great man, and felt at once that it was the face of the greatest man whom he had ever met.

"I am not that man's match," said he to himself. "Perhaps it will all end in being his man, and he my master."

"Silence, knaves!" said William, "and speak one of you at a time. How came this?"

"A likely story, forsooth!" said he, when he had heard. "A poor English potter comes into my court, and murders my men under my very eyes for mere sport? I do not believe you, rascals! You, churl," and he spoke through an English interpreter, "tell me your tale, and justice you shall have or take, as you deserve. I am the King of England, man, and I know your tongue, though I speak it not yet, more pity."

Hereward fell on his knees.

"If you are indeed my lord the king, then I am safe; for there is justice in you: at least so all men say." And he told his tale manfully.

"Splendeur Dex! but this is a far likelier story, and I believe it. Hark you, you ruffians! Here am I, trying to conciliate these English by justice and mercy, whenever they will let me: and here are you outraging them, and driving them mad and desperate, just that you may get a handle against them, and thus rob the poor wretches, and drive them into the forest. From the lowest to the highest—from Ivo Taillebois there, down to you cook-boys—you are all at the same game. And I will stop it! The next time I hear of outrage to unarmed man or harmless woman I will hang that culprit, were he Odo my brother himself."

This excellent speech was enforced with oaths so strange and terrible that Ivo Taillebois shook in his boots; and the chaplain prayed fervently that the roof might not fall in on their heads.

"Thou smilest, man?" said William, quickly, to the kneeling Hereward. "So thou understandest French?"

"A few words only, most gracious king, which we potters pick up, wandering everywhere with our wares," said Hereward, speaking in French; for so keen was William's



eye that he thought it safer to play no tricks with him. Nevertheless, he made his French so execrable that the very scullions grinned, in spite of their fear.

"Look you," said William, "you are no common churl; you have fought too well for that. Let me see your arm."

Hereward drew up his sleeve.

"Potters do not carry sword scars like those; neither are they tattooed like English Thanes. Hold up thy head, man, and let us see thy throat."

Hereward, who had carefully hung down his head to prevent his throat-patterns being seen, was forced to lift it up.

"Aha! So I expected. There is fair ladies' work there. Is not this he who was said to be so like Hereward? Very good. Put him in ward till I come back from hunting. But do him no harm. For"—and William fixed on Hereward eyes of the most intense intelligence—"were he Hereward himself, I should be right glad to see Hereward safe and sound; my man at last, and earl of all between Humber and the Fens."

But Hereward did not rise at the bait. With a face of stupid and ludicrous terror, he made reply in broken French:

"Have mercy, mercy, Lord King! Make not that fiend earl over us. Even Ivo Taillebois there would be better than he. Send him to be earl over the imps in hell, or over the wild Welsh, who are worse still; but not over us, good Lord King, whom he hath polled and peeled till we are—"

"Silence!" said William, laughing, as did all round him. "Thou art a cunning rogue enough, whoever thou art. Go into limbo, and behave thyself till I come back."

"All saints send your grace good sport, and thereby me a good deliverance," quoth Hereward, who knew that his fate might depend on the temper in which William returned. So he was thrust into an outhouse, and there locked up.

He sat on an empty barrel, meditating on the chances of

his submitting to the king after all, when the door opened, and in strode one with a drawn sword in one hand and a pair of leg-shackles in the other.

"Hold out thy shins, fellow! Thou art not going to sit at thine ease there like an abbot, after killing one of us grooms and bringing the rest of us into disgrace. Hold out thy legs, I say!"

"Nothing easier," quoth Hereward, cheerfully, and held out a leg. But when the man stooped to put on the fetters, he received a kick which sent him staggering.

After which he recollected very little, at least in this world. For Hereward cut off his head with his own sword.

After which (says the chronicler) he broke away out of the house, and over garden walls and palings, hiding and running till he got to the front gate, and leaped upon mare Swallow.

And none saw him, save one unlucky groom-boy, who stood yelling and cursing in front of the mare's head, and went to seize her bridle.

Whereon, between the imminent danger and the bad language, Hereward's blood rose, and he smote that unlucky groom-boy; but whether he slew him or not the chronicler had rather not say.

Then he shook up mare Swallow, and with one great shout of "A Wake! A Wake!" rode for his life, with knights and squires (for the hue and cry was raised) galloping at her heels.

### SAVONAROLA<sup>1</sup>

*George Eliot (1819-1880)*

[Savonarola has been condemned to death. Under torture he has confessed that all that he has done has been for personal and political ends, and not under Divine inspiration for the

<sup>1</sup> From *Romola*.

highest good of Florence. Romola, who has believed in him, attends his execution, anxious to hear him retract words spoken in an agony of physical cowardice.]

Romola had seemed to hear, as if they had been a cry, the words repeated to her by many lips—the words uttered by Savonarola when he took leave of those brethren of San Marco who had come to witness his signature of the confession: “Pray for me, for God has withdrawn from me the spirit of prophecy.”

Those words had shaken her with new doubts as to the mode in which he looked back at the past in moments of complete self-possession. And the doubts were strengthened by more piteous things still, which soon reached her ears.

The nineteenth of May had come, and by that day’s sunshine there had entered into Florence the two Papal commissaries, charged with the completion of Savonarola’s trial. They entered amid the acclamations of the people, calling for the death of the Frate. For now the popular cry was, “It is the Frate’s deception that has brought on all our misfortunes; let him be burned, and all things right will be done, and our evils will cease.”

The next day it is well certified that there was fresh and fresh torture of the shattered, sensitive frame; and now, at the first threat and first sight of the horrible implements, Savonarola, in convulsed agitation, fell on his knees, and in brief, passionate words *retracted his confession*, declared that he had spoken falsely in denying his prophetic gift, and that if he suffered he would suffer for the truth—“The things that I have spoken I had them from God.”

But not the less the torture was laid upon him, and when he was under it he was asked why he had uttered those retracting words. Men were not demons in those days, and

yet nothing but confessions of guilt were held a reason for release from torture. The answer came: "I said it that I might seem good; tear me no more; I will tell you the truth."

There were Florentine assessors at this new trial, and those words of twofold retraction had soon spread. They filled Romola with dismayed uncertainty.

"But"—it flashed across her—"there will come a moment when he may speak. When there is no dread hanging over him but the dread of falsehood, when they have brought him into the presence of death, when he is lifted above the people, and looks on them for the last time, they cannot hinder him from speaking a last decisive word. I will be there."

Three days after, on the 23d of May, 1498, there was again a long, narrow platform stretching across the great piazza, from the Palazzo Vecchio toward the Tetta de' Pisani. But there was no grove of fuel as before: instead of that there was one great heap of fuel placed on the circular area which made the termination of the long, narrow platform. And above this heap of fuel rose a gibbet with three halters on it—a gibbet which, having two arms, still looked so much like a cross as to make some beholders uncomfortable, though one arm had been truncated to avoid the resemblance.

On the marble terrace of the Palazzo were three tribunals: one near the door for the Bishop, who was to perform the ceremony of degradation of Fra Girolamo and the two brethren who were to suffer as his followers and accomplices; another for the Papal commissaries, who were to pronounce them heretics and schismatics, and deliver them over to the secular arm; and a third, close to Marzocco, at the corner of the terrace where the platform began, for the Gonfaloniere and the Eight who were to pronounce the sentence of death.

Again the piazza was thronged with expectant faces: again there was to be a great fire kindled. In the majority of the crowd that pressed around the gibbet the expectation was that of ferocious hatred, or of mere hard curiosity to behold a barbarous sight. But there were still many spectators on the wide pavement, on the roofs, and at the windows, who, in the midst of their bitter grief and their own endurance of insult as hypocritical Piagnoni, were not without a lingering hope, even at this eleventh hour, that God would interpose, by some sign, to manifest their beloved prophet as His servant. And there were yet more who looked forward with trembling eagerness, as Romola did, to that final moment when Savonarola might say, "Oh, people, I was innocent of deceit."

Romola was at a window on the north side of the piazza, far away from the marble terrace where the tribunals stood; and near her, also looking on in painful doubt concerning the man who had won his early reverence, was a young Florentine of two-and-twenty, named Jacopo Nardi, afterward to deserve honor as one of the very few who, feeling Fra Girolamo's eminence, have written about him with the simple desire to be veracious. He had said to Romola, with respectful gentleness, when he saw the struggle in her between her shuddering horror of the scene and her yearning to witness what might happen in the last moment:

"Madonna, there is no need for you to look at these cruel things. I will tell you when he comes out of the Palazzo. Trust to me; I know what you would see."

Romola covered her face, but the hootings that seemed to make the hideous scene still visible could not be shut out. At last her arm was touched, and she heard the words, "He comes!" She looked toward the Palace, and could see Savonarola led out in his Dominican garb; could see him standing before the Bishop, and being stripped of the black man-

tle, the white scapulary and long, white tunic, till he stood in a close woollen under-tunic, that told of no sacred office, no rank. He had been degraded, and cut off from the Church Militant.

The baser part of the multitude delight in degradations, apart from any hatred; it is the satire they best understand. There was a fresh hoot of triumph as the three degraded brethren passed on to the tribunal of the Papal commissaries, who were to pronounce them schismatics and heretics. Did not the prophet look like a schismatic and heretic now? It is easy to believe in the damnable state of a man who stands stripped and degraded.

Then the third tribunal was passed—that of the Florentine officials who were to pronounce sentence, and among whom, even at her distance, Romola could discern the odious figure of Dolfo Spini, induced in the grave black lucco, as one of the Eight.

Then the three figures, in their close white raiment, trod their way along the platform, amidst yells and grating tones of insult.

“Cover your eyes, madonna,” said Jacopo Nardi; “Fra Girolamo will be the last.”

It was not long before she had to uncover them again. Savonarola was there. He was not far off her now. He had mounted the steps; she could see him look round on the multitude.

But in the same moment expectation died, and she only saw what he was seeing—torches waving to kindle the fuel beneath his dead body, faces glaring with a yet worse light; she only heard what *he* was hearing—gross jests, taunts, and curses.

The moment was past. Her face was covered again, and she only knew that Savonarola's voice had passed into eternal silence.

JUDGE JEFFREYS<sup>1</sup>*R. D. Blackmore (1825-1900)*

[John Ridd has been summoned to London as witness concerning the doings of the Doones. He is examined by Judge Jeffreys, who two years later, after the Monmouth Rebellion, conducted the "Bloody Assize" in Dorset and Somerset, hanging three hundred and twenty persons and transporting eight hundred and forty-one, many of whom were innocent.]

The chamber was not very large, though lofty to my eyes, and dark, with wooden panels round it. At the further end were some raised seats, such as I have seen in churches, lined with velvet, and having broad elbows, and a canopy over the middle seat. There were only three men sitting here, one in the centre, and one on each side; and all three were done up wonderfully with fur, and robes of state, and curls of thick gray horsehair, crimped and gathered, and plaited down to their shoulders. Each man had an oak desk before him, set at a little distance, and spread with pens and papers. Instead of writing, however, they seemed to be laughing and talking, or rather the one in the middle seemed to be telling some good story, which the others received with approval. By reason of their great perukes it was hard to tell how old they were; but the one who was speaking seemed the youngest, although he was the chief of them. A thick-set, burly, and bulky man, with a blotchy, broad face, and great, square jaws, and fierce eyes full of blazes; he was one to be dreaded by gentle souls, and to be abhorred by the noble.

Between me and the three lord judges some few lawyers were gathering up bags and papers and pens and so forth,

<sup>1</sup> From *Lorna Doone*. Published by Harper & Brothers.

from a narrow table in the middle of the room, as if a case had been disposed of, and no other were called on. But before I had time to look round twice the stout, fierce man espied me, and shouted out with a flashing stare:

"How now, countryman, who art thou?"

"May it please your worship," I answered him, loudly, "I am John Ridd, of Oare parish, in the shire of Somerset, brought to this London, some two months back, by a special messenger, whose name is Jeremy Stickles; and then bound over to be at hand and ready when called upon to give evidence, in a matter unknown to me, but touching the peace of our lord the King, and the well-being of his subjects. Three times I have met our lord the King, but he hath said nothing about his peace, and only held it toward me; and every day save Sunday I have walked up and down the great hall of Westminster, all the business part of the day, expecting to be called upon; yet no one hath called upon me. And now I desire to ask your worship whether I may go home again?"

"Well done, John," replied his lordship, while I was panting with all this speech; "I will go bail for thee, John, thou hast never made such a long speech before; and thou art a spunky Briton, or thou couldst not have made it now. I remember the matter well; and I myself will attend to it, although it arose before my time"—he was but newly Chief Justice—"but I cannot take it now, John. There is no fear of losing thee, John, any more than the Tower of London. I grieve for his Majesty's exchequer, after keeping thee two months or more."

"Nay, my lord, I crave your pardon. My mother hath been keeping me. Not a groat have I received."

"Spank, is it so?" his lordship cried, in a voice that shook the cobwebs, and the frown on his brow shook the hearts of men, and mine as much as the rest of them. "Spank, is



his Majesty come to this, that he starves his own approvers?"

"My lord, my lord," whispered Mr. Spank, the chief-officer of evidence, "the thing hath been overlooked, my lord, among such grave matters of treason."

"I will overlook thy head, foul Spank, on a spike from Temple Bar, if ever I hear of the like again. Vile varlet, what art thou paid for? Thou hast swindled the money thyself, foul Spank; I know thee, though thou art new to me. Bitter is the day for thee that ever I came across thee. Answer me not—one word more and I will have thee on a hurdle." And he swung himself to and fro on his bench with both hands on his knees; and every man waited to let it pass, knowing better than to speak to him.

"John Ridd," said the Lord Chief Justice, at last, recovering a sort of dignity, yet daring Spank from the corners of his eyes to do so much as look at him, "thou hast been shamefully used, John Ridd. Answer me not, boy; not a word; but go to Master Spank, and let me know how he behaves to thee"; here he made a glance at Spank, which was worth at least ten pounds to me; "be thou here again to-morrow; and before any other case is taken, I will see justice done to thee. Now be off, boy; thy name is Ridd, and we are well rid of thee."

I was only too glad to go, after all this tempest, as you may well suppose. For if ever I saw a man's eyes become two holes for the devil to glare from, I saw it that day; and the eyes were those of the Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys.

Mr. Spank was in the lobby before me, and before I had recovered myself—for I was vexed with my own terror—he came up sidling and fawning to me, with a heavy bag of yellow leather.

"Good Master Ridd, take it all, take it all; and say a good word for me to his lordship. He hath taken a strange

fancy to thee; and thou must make the most of it. We never saw man meet him eye to eye so, and yet not contradict him; and that is just what he loveth. Abide in London, Master Ridd, and he will make thy fortune. His joke upon thy name proves that. And I pray you remember, Master Ridd, that the Spanks are sixteen in family."

But I would not take the bag from him, regarding it as a sort of bribe to pay me such a lump of money, without so much as asking how great had been my expenses. Therefore, I only told him that if he would kindly keep the cash for me until the morrow I would spend the rest of the day in counting (which always is sore work with me) how much it had stood me in board and lodging since Master Stickles had rendered me up; for until that time he had borne my expenses. In the morning I would give Mr. Spank a memorandum, duly signed, and attested by my landlord, including the breakfast of that day, and in exchange for this I would take the exact amount from the yellow bag, and be very thankful for it.

"If that is thy way of using opportunity," said Spank, looking at me with some contempt, "thou wilt never thrive in these times, my lad. Even the Lord Chief Justice can be little help to thee unless thou knowest better than that how to help thyself?"

It mattered not to me. The word "approver" stuck in my gorge, as used by the Lord Chief Justice; for we looked upon an approver as a very low thing indeed. I would rather pay for every breakfast, and even every dinner, eaten by me since here I came, than take money as an approver. And indeed I was much disappointed at being taken in that light, having understood that I was sent for as a trusty subject and humble friend of his Majesty.

In the morning I met Mr. Spank waiting for me at the

entrance, and very desirous to see me. I showed him my bill, made out in fair copy, and he laughed at it, and said: "Take it twice over, Master Ridd; once for thine own sake, and once for his Majesty's; as all his loyal tradesmen do, when they can get any. His Majesty knows and is proud of it, for it shows their love of his countenance; and he says, '*bis dat qui cito dat*'—'then how can I grumble at giving twice, when I give so slowly?'"

"Nay, I will take it but once," I said; "if his Majesty loves to be robbed, he need not lack of his desire, while the Spanks are sixteen in family."

The clerk smiled cheerfully at this, being proud of his children's ability; and then having paid my account, he whispered:

"He is all alone this morning, John, and in rare good humor. He hath been promised the handling of poor Master Algernon Sidney, and he says he will soon make republic of him; for his state shall shortly be headless. He is chuckling over his joke, like a pig with a nut; and that always makes him pleasant. John Ridd, my lord!" With that he swung up the curtain bravely; and according to special orders, I stood, face to face, and alone with Judge Jeffreys.

His lordship was busy with some letters, and did not look up for a minute or two, although he knew that I was there. Meanwhile I stood waiting to make my bow; afraid to begin upon him, and wondering at his great bull-head. Then he closed his letters, well pleased with their import, and fixed his bold, broad stare on me, as if I were an oyster opened, and he would know how fresh I was.

"May it please your worship," I said, "here I am according to order, awaiting your good pleasure."

"Thou art made to weight, John, more than order. How much dost thou tip the scales to?"

"Only twelvescore pounds, my lord, when I be in wrestling trim. And sure I must have lost weight here, fretting so long in London."

"Ha, ha! Much fret is there in thee! Hath his Majesty seen thee?"

"Yes, my lord, twice or even thrice; and he made some jest concerning me."

"A very bad one, I doubt not. His humor is not so dainty as mine, but apt to be coarse and unmannerly. Now John, or Jack, by the look of thee, thou art more used to be called."

"Yes, your worship, when I am with old Molly and Betty Muxworthy."

"Peace, thou forward varlet! There is a deal too much of thee. We shall have to try short commons with thee, and thou art a very long common. Ha, ha! Where is that rogue Spank? Spank must hear that by-and-bye. It is beyond thy great thick head, Jack."

"Not so, my lord; I have been at school, and had very bad jokes made upon me."

"Ha, ha! It hath hit thee hard. And faith, it would be hard to miss thee, even with harpoon. And thou lookest like to blubber, now. Capital, in faith! I have thee on every side, Jack, and thy sides are manifold; manyfolded at any rate. Thou shalt have double expenses, Jack, for the wit thou hast provoked in me."

"Heavy goods lack heavy payment, is a proverb down our way my lord."

"Ah, I hurt thee, I hurt thee, Jack. The harpoon hath no tickle for thee. Now, Jack Whale, having hauled thee hard, we will proceed to examine thee." Here all his manner was changed, and he looked with his heavy brows bent upon me, as if he had never laughed in his life, and would allow none else to do so,

"I am ready to answer, my lord," I replied, "if he asks me nought beyond my knowledge, or beyond my honor."

"Hadst better answer me everything, lump. What hast thou to do with honor? Now is there in thy neighborhood a certain nest of robbers, miscreants, and outlaws, whom all men fear to handle?"

"Yes, my lord. At least I believe some of them be robbers; and all of them are outlaws."

"And what is your high sheriff about, that he doth not hang them all? Or send them up for me to hang, without more to do about them?"

"I reckon that he is afraid, my lord; it is not safe to meddle with them. They are of good birth, and reckless; and their place is very strong."

"Good birth! What was Lord Russell of, Lord Essex, and this Sidney? 'Tis the surest heirship to the block to be the chip of an old one. What is the name of this pestilent race, and how many of them are there?"

"They are the Doones of Bagworthy forest, may it please your worship. And we reckon there be about forty of them, besides the women and children."

"Forty Doones, all forty thieves! and women and children! Thunder of God! How long have they been there then?"

"They may have been there thirty years, my lord; and indeed they may have been forty. Before the great war broke out they came, longer back than I can remember."

"Ay, long before thou wast born, John. Good, thou speakest plainly. Woe betide a liar, when so I get hold of him. Ye want me on the Western Circuit; by God! and ye shall have me, when London traitors are spun and swung. There is a family called De Whichehalse living very nigh thee, John?"

This he said in a sudden manner, as if to take me off my

guard, and fixed his great, thick eyes on me. And in truth I was much astonished.

"Yes, my lord, there is. At least, not so very far from us. Baron de Whichehalse, of Ley Manor."

"Baron, ha! of the Exchequer—eh, lad? And taketh dues instead of his Majesty. Somewhat which halts there ought to come a little further, I trow. It shall be seen to, as well as the witch which makes it so to halt. Riotous knaves in West England, drunken outlaws, you shall dance, if ever I play pipe for you. John Ridd, I will come to Oare parish, and rout out the Oare of Babylon."

"Although your worship is so learned," I answered, seeing that now he was beginning to make things uneasy, "your worship, though being Chief Justice, does little justice to us. We are downright good and loyal folk; and I have not seen, since here I came to this great town of London, any who may better us, or even come anigh us, in honesty, and goodness, and duty to our neighbors. For we are very quiet folk, not prating our own virtues—"

"Enough, good John, enough! Knowest thou not that modesty is the maidenhood of virtue, lost even by her own approval? Now hast thou ever heard or thought that De Whichehalse is in league with the Doones of Bagworthy?"

Saying these words rather slowly, he skewered his great eyes into mine, so that I could not think at all, neither look at him, nor yet away. The idea was so new to me, that it set my wits all wandering; and looking into me, he saw that I was groping for the truth.

"John Ridd, thine eyes are enough for me. I see thou hast never dreamed of it. Now hast thou ever seen a man whose name is Thomas Faggus?"

"Yes, sir, many and many a time. He is my own worthy cousin; and I fear that he hath intentions"—here I stopped, having no right there to speak about our Annie.

"Tom Faggus is a good man," he said; and his great, square face had a smile which showed me he had met my cousin; "Master Faggus hath made mistakes as to the title to property, as lawyers oftentimes may do; but take him all for all, he is a thoroughly straightforward man; presents his bill, and has it paid, and makes no charge for drawing it. Nevertheless, we must tax his costs, as of any other solicitor."

"To be sure, to be sure, my lord!" was all that I could say, not understanding what all this meant.

"I fear he will come to the gallows," said the Lord Chief Justice, sinking his voice below the echoes; "tell him this from me, Jack. He shall never be condemned before me; but I cannot be everywhere; and some of our Justices may keep short memory of his dinners. Tell him to change his name, turn parson, or do something else, to make it wrong to hang him. Parson is the best thing; he hath such command of features, and he might take his tithes on horseback. Now a few more things, John Ridd; and for the present I have done with thee."

All my heart leaped up at this, to get away from London so; and yet I could hardly trust to it.

"Is there any sound round your way of disaffection to his Majesty, his most precious Majesty?"

"No, my lord: no sign whatever. We pray for him in church perhaps; and we talk about him afterward, hoping it may do him good, as it is intended. But after that we have nought to say, not knowing much about him—at least till I get home again."

"That is as it should be, John. And the less you say the better. But I have heard of things in Taunton, and even nearer to you in Dulverton, and even nigher still upon Exmoor; things which are of the pillory kind, and even more of the gallows. I see that you know nought of them.

Nevertheless, it will not be long before all England hears of them. Now, John, I have taken a liking to thee; for never man told me the truth, without fear or favor, more thoroughly and truly than thou hast done. Keep thou clear of this, my son. It will come to nothing; yet many shall swing high for it. Even I could not save thee, John Ridd, if thou wert mixed in this affair. Keep from the Doones, keep from De Whichehalse, keep from everything which leads beyond the sight of thy knowledge. I meant to use thee as my tool; but I see thou art too honest and simple. I will send a sharper down; but never let me find thee, John, either a tool for the other side, or a tube for my words to pass through."

Here the Lord Justice gave me such a glare, that I wished myself well rid of him, though thankful for his warnings; and seeing how he had made upon me a long, abiding mark of fear, he smiled again in a jocular manner, and said:

"Now, get thee gone, Jack. I shall remember thee; and, I trow, thou wiltst not for many a day forget me."

"My lord, I was never so glad to go; for the hay must be in, and the ricks unthatched, and none of them can make spars like me, and two men to twist every hay-rope, and mother thinking it all right, and listening right and left to lies, and cheated at every pig she kills, and even the skins of the sheep to go—"

"John Ridd, I thought none could come nigh your folk, in honesty, and goodness, and duty to their neighbors!"

"Sure enough, my lord; but by our folk, I mean ourselves, not the men nor women neither—"

"That will do, John. Go thy way. Not men, nor women neither, are better than they need be."

I wished to set this matter right; but his worship would not hear me; and only drove me out of the court, saying that men were thieves and liars, no more in one place



than another, but all alike all over the world, and women not far behind them. It was not for me to dispute this point (though I was not yet persuaded of it), both because my lord was a Judge, and must know more about it, and also that being a man myself I might seem to be defending myself in an unbecoming manner. Therefore I made a low bow, and went; in doubt as to which had the right of it.

### THE MURDER OF RIZZIO<sup>1</sup>

*Maurice Hewlett (1861)*

[David Rizzio, a mean-born Italian, has brought scandal on Mary, Queen of Scots by being her reputed favorite. Darnley, Queen Mary's husband, plotting with several of the highest nobles, has determined to put Rizzio out of the way. The scene is here narrated as watched by Des-Essars, the Queen's French page.]

The Queen, as he could see, lay back in her elbow-chair, obviously suffering, picking at some food before her, but not eating any. Her lips were chapped and dry; she moistened them continually, then bit them. Lady Argyll, handsome, strong-featured, and swarthy, sat bolt upright and stared at the sconce on the wall; and as for the Italian, he did as he always did, lounged opposite his Queen, his head against the wainscot. Reflective after food, he used his toothpick, but no other ceremony whatsoever. He wore his cap on his head, ignored Lady Argyll—half-sister to the throne—and when he looked at her Majesty, as he often did, it was as a man might look at his wife. She, although she seemed too weary or too indifferent to lift her heavy eyelids, knew perfectly well that both her com-

<sup>1</sup> From *The Queen's Quair*. Copyright, 1903, by Maurice Hewlett. Published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

panions were watching her: Des-Essars was sure of that. He watched her himself intensely, and only once saw her meet Davy's eye, when she passed her cup to him to be filled with drink, and he, as if thankful to be active, poured the wine with a flourish and smiled in her face as he served her. She observed both act and actor, and made no sign, neither drank from the cup now she had it; but sank back to her wretchedness and the contemplation of it, being in that pettish, brooding habit of mind which would rather run on in a groove of pain than brace itself to some new shift. As he watched what was a familiar scene to him, Des-Essars was wondering whether he should dare go in and report what he had observed in the hall. No: on the whole he would not do that. Signior Davy, who was a weasel in such a field as a young man's mind, would assuredly fasten upon him at some false turn or other, never let go, and show no mercy. Like all the underlings of Holyrood, he went in mortal fear of the Italian, though, unlike any of them, he admired him.

The little cabinet was very dim. There were candles on the table, but none alight in the sconces. From beyond, through a half-open door, came the drowsy voices of the Queen's women, murmuring their way through two more hours' vigil. Interminable nights! Cards would follow supper, you must know, and Signior Davy would try to outsit Lady Argyll. He always tried, and generally succeeded.

The Queen shifted, sighed, and played hasty tunes with her fingers on the table; she was never still. It was evident that she was at once very wretched and very irritable. Her dark-red gown was cut low and square, Venetian mode; Des-Essars could see quite well how short her breath was, and how quick. Yet she said nothing. Once she and Lady Argyll exchanged glances; the Mistress of

the Robes inquired with her eyebrows; the Queen fretfully shook the question away. It was an unhappy supper for all but the graceless Italian, who was much at his ease now that he had unfastened some of the hooks of his jacket. The French lad, who had always been in love with his mistress and yet able to criticise her—as a Protestant may adore the Virgin Mary—admits that at this moment of her life, in this bitter mood, he found her extremely piquant. “This pale, helpless, angry, pretty woman!” he exclaims upon his page. He would seldom allow that she was more than just a pretty woman; and now she was a good deal less. Her charms for him had never been of the face—she had an allure of her own. “Mistress Seton was lovely, I consider my Lady Bothwell most beautiful, and Mistress Fleming not far short of that; but the Queen’s Majesty—ah! the coin from Mr. Knox’s mint rang true. Honeypot! Honeypot! There you had her essence; sleepy, slow, soft sweetness—with a sharp aftertaste, for all that, to prick the tongue and set it longing.”

More than nice considerations, these, which the stealthy opening of a door and a step in the passage disturbed. Des-Essars would have straightened himself on that signal, to stand as a page should stand in the view of any one entering. Then he saw, out of the corner of his eye, the King go down the little stair. It must be the King, because—to say nothing of the tall figure, small-headed as it was—he had seen the long white gown. The King wore a white quilted-silk bedgown, lined with ermine. At the turning of the stair Des-Essars saw him just glance backward over his shoulder toward the cabinet, but, being stiff within the shadow of the curtain, was not himself seen. After that furtive look he saw him go down the privy stair, his hand on the rope. Obviously he had an assignation with some woman below.

Before he had time to correct this conclusion by the memory of the cloaked men in the hall, he heard returning steps—somebody, this time, coming up the steps; no! there were more than one—two or three at least. He was sure of this—his ears had never deceived him—and yet it was the King alone who appeared at the stair-head with a lighted taper in his hand, which he must have got from the hall. He stood there for a moment, his face showing white and strained in the light, his mouth open, too; then, blowing out his taper, he came directly to the curtain of the Queen's cabinet, pulled it aside and went in. He had actually covered Des-Essars with the curtain without a notion that he was there; but the youth had had time to observe that he was fully dressed beneath his gown, and to get a hot whiff of the strong waters in his breath as he passed in. Urgent to see what all this might mean, he peeped through the hangings.

Lady Argyll rose up slowly when she saw the King, but made no reverence. Very few did in these days. The Italian followed her example, perfectly composed. The Queen took no notice of him. She rested as she had been, her head on the droop, eyebrows raised, eyes fixed on the disordered platter. The King, whose color was very high, came behind her chair, stooped, and put his arm round her. His hand covered her bosom. She did not avoid, though she did not relish this.

"Madam, it is very late," he said, and spoke breathlessly.

"It is not I who detain you," said she.

"No, madam, no. But you do detain these good servants of yours. Here is your sister of Argyll; next door are your women. And so it is night after night. I think not of myself."

She lifted her head a little to look up sideways—but not at him. "You think of very little else, to my understand-

ing. Having brought me to the state where now I am, you are inclined to leave me alone. Rather, you *were* inclined; for this is a new humor, little to my taste."

"I should be oftener here, believe me," says the King, still embracing her, "if I could feel more sure of a welcome—if all might be again as it was once between you and me."

She laughed, without mirth; then asked, "And how was it—once?"

The King stooped down and kissed her forehead, by the same act gently pushing back her head till it rested on his shoulder.

"Thus it was once, my Mary," he said; and as she looked up into his face, wondering over it, searching it, he kissed her again. "Thus it was once," he repeated in a louder voice; and then, louder yet, "Thus, O Queen of Scots!"

Once more he kissed her, and once more he cried out, "O Queen of Scots!" Then Des-Essars heard the footsteps begin again on the privy stair, and saw men come into the passage—many men.

Three of them, in cloaks and steel bonnets, came quickly to the door and passed him. They went through the curtain. These three were Lord Ruthven, Ker of Fawdonsyde, and Mr. Archibald Douglas. Rigid in his shadow, Des-Essars watched all.

Seeing events in the Italian's eyes, rather than with her own—for Signior Davy had narrowed his to two threads of blue—the Queen lifted her head from her husband's arm and looked curiously round. The three stood hesitant within the door; Ruthven had his cap on his head, Fawdonsyde his, but Archie showed his gray poll. Little things like these angered her quickly; she shook free from the King and sat upright.

"What is this, my Lord Ruthven? You forget yourself."

"Madam—" he began; but Douglas nudged him furiously.

"Your bonnet, man, your bonnet!"

The Queen had risen, and the fixed direction of her eyes gave him understanding.

"Ah, my knapsack! I do as others do, madam," he said, with a meaning look at the Italian. "What is pleasant to your Majesty in yonder servant should not be an offence in a councillor."

"No, no, ma'am, nor it should not," muttered Fawdon-syde, who, nevertheless, doffed his bonnet.

The King was holding her again, she staring still at the scowling man in steel. "What do you want with me, Ruthven?" she said. She had very dry lips.

He made a clumsy bow. "May it please your Majesty," he said, "we are come to rid you of this fellow Davy, who has been overlong familiar here, and overmuch—for your Majesty's honor."

She turned her face to the King, whose arm still held her—a white, strong face.

"You," she said, fiercely, "what have you to do in this? What have you to say?"

"I think with Ruthven—with all of them—my friends and well-wishers. 'Tis the common voice: they say I am betrayed, upon my soul! I cannot endure—I entreat you to trust me—" He was incoherent.

She broke away from his arm, took a step forward and put herself between him and the three. She was so angry that she could not find words. She stammered, began to speak, rejected what words came. The Italian took off his cap and watched Ruthven intently. The moment of pause that ensued was broken by Ruthven's raising his hand, for the Queen flashed out, "Put down your hand,

sirl" and seemed as if she would have struck him. Fawdonsyde here cocked his pistol and deliberately raised it against the Queen's person. "Treason! treason!" shrieked Des-Essars from the curtain, and blundered forward to the villain.

But the Queen had been before him; at last she had found words, and deeds. She drew herself up, quivering, went directly toward Fawdonsyde, and beat down the point of the pistol with her flat hand. "Do you dare so much? Then I dare more. What shameless thing do you here? If I had a sword in my hand—" Here she stopped, tongue-tied at what was done to her.

For Ruthven, regardless of majesty, had got her round the middle. He pushed her back into the King's arms; and, "Take your wife, my lord," says he; "take your good wife in your arms and cherish her, while we do what must be done."

The King held her fast in spite of her struggles. At that moment the Italian made a rattling sound in his throat and backed from the table. Archie Douglas stepped behind the King, to get round the little room; Ruthven approached his victim from the other side; the Italian pulled at the table, got it between himself and the enemy, and overset it; then Lady Argyll screamed, and snatched at a candlestick as all went down. It was the only light left in the room, held up in her hand like a beacon above a tossing sea. Where was Des-Essars? Cuffed aside to the wall, like a rag doll. The maids were packed in the door of the bedchamber, and one of them had pulled him into safety among them.

All that followed he marked: how the frenzied Italian, hedged in between Douglas and Ruthven, vaulted the table, knocked over Fawdonsyde, and then, whimpering like a woman, crouched by the Queen, his fingers in the

pleats of her gown. He saw the King's light eyelashes blink, and heard his breath come whistling through his nose, and that pale, disfigured girl, held up closely against her husband, moaning and hiding her face in his breast. And now Ruthven, grinning horribly, swearing to himself, and Douglas, whining like a dog at a rat-hole, were at their man's hands, trying to drag him off. Fawdonsyde hovered about, hopeful to help. Lady Argyll held up the candle.

Douglas wrenched open one hand, Ruthven got his head down and bit the other till it parted.

"*O Dio! O Dio!*" Long shuddering cries went up from the Italian as they dragged him out into the passage, where the others waited.

It was dark there, and one knew not how full of men; but Des-Essars heard them snarling and mauling like a pack of wolves; heard the scuffling, the panting, the short oaths—and then a piercing scream. At that there was silence; then some one said, as he struck, "There! there! Hog of Turin!" and another (Lindsay), "He's done!"

The King put the Queen among her maids in a hurry, and went running out into the passage as they were shuffling the body down the stair. Des-Essars just noticed, and remembered afterward, his naked dagger in his hand as he went out helter-skelter after his friends. Upon some instinct or other he followed him as far as the head of the stair. From the bottom came up a great clamor—howls of execration, one or two cries for the King, a round of welcome when he appeared. The page ran back to the cabinet, and found it dark.

It was bad to hear the Queen's laughter in the bed-chamber—worse when that shuddered out into moaning, and she began to wail as if she were keening her dead. He could not bear it, so crept out again to spy about the



passages and listen to the shouting from the hall. "A Douglas! a Douglas!" was the most common cry. Peeping through a window which gave on to the front, he saw the snowy court ablaze with torches, alive with men, and against the glare the snowflakes whirling by, like smuts from a burning chimney. It was clear enough now that the palace was held, all its inmates prisoners. But what seemed more terrifying than that was the emptiness of the upper corridors, the sudden hush after so much riot—and the Queen's moan, haunting all the dark like a lost soul.

## IV

### **Epics of Conflict**

The Fight on the Moor.	<i>Sir Walter Scott</i> (1771-1832)
The Battle of Senlac.	<i>Bulwer Lytton</i> (1803-1873)
The Flaming Tinman.	<i>George Borrow</i> (1803-1881)
Waterloo.	<i>Charles Lever</i> (1806-1872)
The Fight at the Inn.	<i>Charles Reade</i> (1814-1884)
How They Took the Gold-Train.	<i>Charles Kingsley</i> (1819-1875)
The Last Fight of Carver Doone.	<i>R. D. Blackmore</i> (1825-1900)
The Roman Chariot Race.	<i>Lew Wallace</i> (1827-1905)
The Duel in the Snow.	<i>Robert Louis Stevenson</i> (1850-1894)
The Siege of the Round-House.	<i>Robert Louis Stevenson</i> (1850-1894)
Annixter's Duel with the Cow-Puncher.	<i>Frank Norris</i> (1870-1902)

## THE FIGHT ON THE MOOR<sup>1</sup>

*Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832)*

[Claverhouse finds the Presbyterian army occupying a strong position, defended by a morass. He is outnumbered, and sends his nephew, Count Richard Grahame, with a flag of truce.]

CORNET RICHARD GRAHAME descended the hill, bearing in his hand the extempore flag of truce, and making his managed horse keep time by bounds and curvets to the tune which he whistled. The trumpeter followed. Five or six horsemen, having something the appearance of officers, detached themselves from each flank of the Presbyterian army, and, meeting in the centre, approached the ditch which divided the hollow as near as the morass would permit. Toward this group, but keeping the opposite side of the swamp, Cornet Grahame directed his horse, his motions being now the conspicuous object of attention to both armies; and, without disparagement to the courage of either, it is probable there was a general wish on both sides that this embassy might save the risks and bloodshed of the impending conflict.

When he had arrived right opposite to those who, by their advancing to receive his message, seemed to take upon themselves as the leaders of the enemy, Cornet Grahame commanded his trumpeter to sound a parley. The insurgents, having no instrument of martial music where-

<sup>1</sup> From *Old Mortality*.

with to make the appropriate reply, one of their number called out with a loud, strong voice, demanding to know why he approached their leaguer.

"To summon you in the King's name and in that of Colonel John Grahame of Claverhouse, specially commissioned by the right honorable Privy Council of Scotland," answered the Cornet, "to lay down your arms and dismiss the followers whom ye have led into rebellion, contrary to the laws of God, of the King, and of the country."

"Return to them that sent thee," said the insurgent leader, "and tell them that we are this day in arms for a broken Covenant and a persecuted Kirk; tell them that we renounce the licentious and perjured Charles Stewart, whom you call king, even as he renounced the Covenant after having once and again sworn to prosecute to the utmost of his power all the ends thereof, really, constantly, and sincerely all the days of his life, having no enemies but the enemies of the Covenant, and no friends but its friends. Whereas, far from keeping the oath he had called God and angels to witness, his first step, after his incoming into these kingdoms, was the fearful grasping at the prerogative of the Almighty by that hideous Act of Supremacy, together with his expulsing without summons, libel, or process of law, hundreds of famous, faithful preachers, thereby wringing the bread of life out of the mouth of hungry, poor creatures, and forcibly cramming their throats with the lifeless, saltless, foisonless, lukewarm drammock of the fourteen false prelates and their sycophantic, formal, carnal, scandalous creature-curates."

"I did not come to hear you preach," answered the officer, "but to know in one word if you will disperse yourselves, on condition of a free pardon to all but the murderers of the late Archbishop of St. Andrews, or whether

you will abide the attack of his Majesty's forces, which will instantly advance upon you."

"In one word, then," answered the spokesman, "we are here with our swords on our thighs, as men that watch in the night. We will take one part and portion together as brethren in righteousness. Whosoever assails us in our good cause, his blood be on his own head. So return to them that sent thee, and God give them and thee a sight of the evil of your ways!"

"Is not your name," said the Cornet, who began to recollect having seen the person whom he was now speaking with, "John Balfour of Burley?"

"And if it be," said the spokesman, "hast thou aught to say against it?"

"Only," said the Cornet, "that, as you are excluded from pardon in the name of the King and of my commanding officer, it is to these country people, and not to you, that I offer it; and it is not with you, or such as you, that I am sent to treat."

"Thou art a young soldier, friend," said Burley, "and scant well learned in thy trade, or thou wouldst know that the bearer of a flag of truce cannot treat with the army, but through their officers; and that if he presume to do otherwise he forfeits his safe conduct."

While speaking these words, Burley unslung his carbine and held it in readiness.

"I am not to be intimidated from the discharge of my duty by the menaces of a murderer," said Cornet Grahame. "Hear me, good people; I proclaim, in the name of the King, and of my commanding officer, full and free pardon to all, excepting—"

"I give thee fair warning," said Burley, presenting his piece.

"A free pardon to all," continued the young officer,

still addressing the body of the insurgents—"to all but—"

"Then the Lord grant grace to thy soul. Amen!" said Burley.

With these words he fired, and Cornet Richard Grahame dropped from his horse. The shot was mortal. The unfortunate young gentleman had only strength to turn himself on the ground and mutter forth, "My poor mother!" when life forsook him in the effort. His startled horse fled back to the regiment at the gallop, as did his scarce less affrighted attendant.

"What have you done?" said one of Balfour's brother officers.

"My duty," said Balfour, firmly. "Is it not written, 'Thou shalt be zealous even to slaying?' Let those who dare now venture to speak of truce or pardon!"

Claverhouse saw his nephew fall. He turned his eye on Evandale, while a transitory glance of indescribable emotion disturbed for a second's space the serenity of his features, and briefly said, "You see the event."

"I will avenge him, or die!" exclaimed Evandale; and, putting his horse into motion, rode furiously down the hill, followed by his own troop and that of the deceased Cornet, which broke down without orders; and, each striving to be the foremost to revenge their young officer, their ranks soon fell into confusion. These forces formed the first line of the Royalists. It was in vain that Claverhouse exclaimed, "Halt! halt! this rashness will undo us!" It was all that he could accomplish by galloping along the second line, entreating, commanding, and even menacing the men with his sword, that he could restrain them from following an example so contagious.

"Allan," he said, as soon as he had rendered the men in some degree more steady, "lead them slowly down the hill

to support Lord Evandale, who is about to need it very much. Bothwell, thou art a cool and a daring fellow—”

“Ay,” muttered Bothwell, “you can remember that in a moment like this.”

“Lead ten file up the hollow to the right,” continued his commanding officer, “and try every means to get through the bog; then form and charge the rebels in flank and rear while they are engaged with us in front.”

Bothwell made a signal of intelligence and obedience, and moved off with his party at a rapid pace.

Meantime the disaster which Claverhouse had apprehended did not fail to take place. The troopers who, with Lord Evandale, had rushed down upon the enemy, soon found their disorderly career interrupted by the impracticable character of the ground. Some stuck fast in the morass as they attempted to struggle through, some recoiled from the attempt and remained on the brink, others dispersed to seek a more favorable place to pass the swamp. In the midst of this confusion the first line of the enemy, of which the foremost rank knelt, the second stooped, and the third stood upright, poured in a close and destructive fire that emptied at least a score of saddles, and increased tenfold the disorder into which the horsemen had fallen. Lord Evandale in the mean time, at the head of a very few well-mounted men, had been able to clear the ditch, but was no sooner across than he was charged by the left body of the enemy's cavalry, who, encouraged by the small number of opponents that had made their way through the broken ground, set upon them with the utmost fury, crying, “Woe, woe to the uncircumcised Philistines! Down with Dagon and all his adherents!”

The young nobleman fought like a lion; but most of his followers were killed, and he himself could not have escaped the same fate but for a heavy fire of carbines which



Claverhouse, who had now advanced with the second line near to the ditch, poured so effectually upon the enemy that both horse and foot for a moment began to shrink, and Lord Evandale, disengaged from his unequal combat, and finding himself nearly alone, took the opportunity to effect his retreat through the morass. But, notwithstanding the loss they had sustained by Claverhouse's first fire, the insurgents became soon aware that the advantage of numbers and of position were so decidedly theirs that, if they could but persist in making a brief but resolute defence, the Life Guards must necessarily be defeated. Their leaders flew through their ranks exhorting them to stand firm, and pointing out how efficacious their fire must be where both men and horse were exposed to it; for the troopers, according to custom, fired without having dismounted. Claverhouse more than once, when he perceived his best men dropping by a fire which they could not effectually return, made desperate efforts to pass the bog at various points and renew the battle on firm ground and fiercer terms. But the close fire of the insurgents, joined to the natural difficulties of the pass, foiled his attempts in every point.

"We must retreat," he said to Evandale, unless Bothwell can effect a diversion in our favor. In the mean time draw the men out of fire and leave skirmishers behind these patches of alder-bushes to keep the enemy in check."

These directions being accomplished, the appearance of Bothwell with his party was earnestly expected. But Bothwell had his own disadvantages to struggle with. His detour to the right had not escaped the penetrating observation of Burley, who made a corresponding movement with the left wing of the mounted insurgents, so that when Bothwell, after riding a considerable way up the valley, found a place at which the bog could be passed, though

with some difficulty, he perceived he was still in front of a superior enemy. His daring character was in no degree checked by this unexpected opposition.

"Follow me, my lads!" he called to his men. "Never let it be said that we turned our backs before these canting Roundheads!"

With that, as if inspired by the spirit of his ancestors, he shouted, "Bothwell! Bothwell!" and, throwing himself into the morass, he struggled through it at the head of his party, and attacked that of Burley with such fury that he drove them back above a pistol-shot, killing three men with his own hand. Burley, perceiving the consequences of a defeat on this point, and that his men, though more numerous, were unequal to the regulars in using their arms and managing their horses, threw himself across Bothwell's way and attacked him hand to hand. Each of the combatants was considered as the champion of his respective party, and a result ensued more usual in romance than in real story. Their followers on either side instantly paused and looked on as if the fate of the day were to be decided by the event of the combat between these two redoubted swordsmen. The combatants themselves seemed of the same opinion; for, after two or three eager cuts and pushes had been exchanged, they paused, as if by joint consent, to recover the breath which preceding exertions had exhausted, and to prepare for a duel in which each seemed conscious he had met his match.

"You are the murdering villain Burley," said Bothwell, gripping his sword firmly, and setting his teeth close; "you escaped me once, but (he swore an oath too tremendous to be written down) thy head is worth its weight of silver, and it shall go home at my saddle-bow, or my saddle shall go home empty for me."

"Yes," replied Burley, with stern and gloomy delibera-

tion, "I am that John Balfour who promised to lay thy head where thou shouldst never lift it again; and God do so unto me, and more also, if I do not redeem my word!"

"Then a bed of heather or a thousand merks!" said Bothwell, striking at Burley with his full force.

"The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" answered Balfour, as he parried and returned the blow.

There have seldom met two combatants more equally matched in strength of body, skill in the management of their weapons and horses, determined courage, and unrelenting hostility. After exchanging many desperate blows, each receiving and inflicting several wounds, though of no great consequence, they grappled together as if with the desperate impatience of mortal hate, and Bothwell, seizing his enemy by the shoulder-belt, while the grasp of Balfour was upon his own collar, they came headlong to the ground. The companions of Burley hastened to his assistance, but were repelled by the dragoons, and the battle became again general. But nothing could withdraw the attention of the combatants from each other, or induce them to unclothe the deadly clasp in which they rolled together on the ground, tearing, struggling, and foaming with the inveteracy of thoroughbred bulldogs.

Several horses passed over them in the *mêlée* without their quitting hold of each other, until the sword-arm of Bothwell was broken by the kick of a charger. He then relinquished his grasp with a deep and suppressed groan, and both combatants started to their feet. Bothwell's right hand dropped helpless by his side, but his left gripped to the place where his dagger hung; it had escaped from the sheath in the struggle, and, with a look of mingled rage and despair, he stood totally defenceless as Balfour, with a laugh of savage joy, flourished his sword aloft, and then passed it through his adversary's body. Bothwell

received the thrust without falling; it had only grazed on his ribs. He attempted no further defence, but, looking at Burley with a grin of deadly hatred, exclaimed, "Base peasant churl, thou hast spilt the blood of a line of kings!"

"Die, wretch! die!" said Balfour, redoubling the thrust with better aim; and, setting his foot on Bothwell's body as he fell, he a third time transfixed him with his sword. "Die, bloodthirsty dog! die as thou hast lived! die, like the beasts that perish, hoping nothing, believing nothing—"

"And FEARING nothing!" said Bothwell, collecting the last effort of respiration to utter these desperate words, and expiring as soon as they were spoken.

To catch a stray horse by the bridle, throw himself upon it, and rush to the assistance of his followers, was with Burley the affair of a moment. And as the fall of Bothwell had given to the insurgents all the courage of which it had deprived his comrades, the issue of this partial contest did not remain long undecided. Several soldiers were slain, the rest driven back over the morass and dispersed, and the victorious Burley, with his party, crossed it in their turn, to direct against Claverhouse the very manœuvre which he had instructed Bothwell to execute. He now put his troop in order with the view of attacking the right wing of the Royalists; and, sending news of his success to the main body, exhorted them, in the name of Heaven, to cross the marsh and work out the glorious work of the Lord by a general attack upon the enemy.

Meanwhile Claverhouse, who had in some degree remedied the confusion occasioned by the first irregular and unsuccessful attack, and reduced the combat in front to a distant skirmish with firearms, chiefly maintained by some dismounted troopers whom he had posted behind the cover of the shrubby copses of alders, which in some places covered the edge of the morass, and whose close, cool, and

well-aimed fire greatly annoyed the enemy and concealed their own deficiency of numbers—Claverhouse, while he maintained the contest in this manner, still expecting that a diversion by Bothwell and his party might facilitate a general attack, was accosted by one of the dragoons, whose bloody face and jaded horse bore witness he was come from hard service.

“What is the matter, Halliday?” said Claverhouse, for he knew every man in his regiment by name. “Where is Bothwell?”

“Bothwell is down,” replied Halliday, “and many a pretty fellow with him.”

“Then the King,” said Claverhouse, with his usual composure, “has lost a stout soldier. The enemy have passed the marsh, I suppose?”

“With a strong body of horse, commanded by the devil incarnate that killed Bothwell,” answered the terrified soldier.

“Hush! hush!” said Claverhouse, putting his finger on his lips, “not a word to any one but me. Lord Evandale, we must retreat. The fates will have it so. Draw together the men that are dispersed in the skirmishing work. Let Allan form the regiment, and do you two retreat up the hill in two bodies, each halting alternately as the others fall back. I’ll keep the rogues in check with the rear guard, making a stand and facing from time to time. They will be over the ditch presently, for I see their whole line in motion and preparing to cross; therefore lose no time.”

“Where is Bothwell with his party?” said Lord Evandale, astonished at the coolness of his commander.

“Fairly disposed of,” said Claverhouse, in his ear; “the King has lost a servant and the devil has got one. But away to business, Evandale; ply your spurs and get the men together. Allan and you must keep them steady.

This retreating is new work for us all; but our turn will come round another day."

Evandale and Allan betook themselves to their task; but ere they had arranged the regiment for the purpose of retreating in two alternate bodies, a considerable number of the enemy had crossed the marsh. Claverhouse, who had retained immediately around his person a few of his most active and tried men, charged those who had crossed in person while they were yet disordered by the broken ground. Some they killed, others they repulsed into the morass, and checked the whole so as to enable the main body, now greatly diminished, as well as disheartened by the loss they had sustained, to commence their retreat up the hill.

But the enemy's van, being soon reinforced and supported, compelled Claverhouse to follow his troops. Never did man, however, better maintain the character of a soldier than he did that day. Conspicuous by his black horse and white feather, he was first in the repeated charges which he made at every favorable opportunity to arrest the progress of the pursuers and to cover the retreat of his regiment. The object of aim to every one, he seemed as if he were impassive to their shot. The superstitious fanatics, who looked upon him as a man gifted by the Evil Spirit with supernatural means of defence, averred that they saw the bullets recoil from his jack-boots and buff-coat like hailstones from a rock of granite, as he galloped to and fro amid the storm of the battle. Many a Whig that day loaded his musket with a dollar cut into slugs in order that a silver bullet (such was their belief) might bring down the persecutor of the holy kirk, on whom lead had no power.

"Try him with the cold steel," was the cry at every renewed charge; "powder is wasted on him. Ye might as weel shoot at the Auld Enemy himself,"

But though this was loudly shouted, yet the awe on the insurgents' minds was such that they gave way before Claverhouse as before a supernatural being, and few men ventured to cross swords with him. Still, however, he was fighting in retreat, and with all the disadvantages attending that movement. The soldiers behind him, as they beheld the increasing number of enemies who poured over the morass, became unsteady; and at every successive movement Major Allan and Lord Evandale found it more and more difficult to bring them to halt and form line regularly; while, on the other hand, their motions in the act of retreating became by degrees much more rapid than was consistent with good order. As the retiring soldiers approached nearer to the top of the ridge from which in so luckless an hour they had descended, the panic began to increase. Every one became impatient to place the brow of the hill between him and the continued fire of the pursuers; nor could any individual think it reasonable that he should be the last in the retreat, and thus sacrifice his own safety for that of others. In this mood several troopers set spurs to their horses and fled outright, and the others became so unsteady in their movements and formations that their officers every moment feared they would follow the same example.

Amid this scene of blood and confusion, the trampling of the horses, the groans of the wounded, the continued fire of the enemy, which fell in a succession of unintermitted musketry, while loud shouts accompanied each bullet which the fall of a trooper showed to have been successfully aimed—amid all the terrors and disorders of such a scene, and when it was dubious how soon they might be totally deserted by their dispirited soldiery, Evandale could not forbear remarking the composure of his commanding officer. Not at Lady Margaret's breakfast-table that morning did

his eye appear more lively, or his demeanor more composed. He had closed up to Evandale for the purpose of giving some orders and picking out a few men to reinforce his rear guard.

"If this bout lasts five minutes longer," he said in a whisper, "our rogues will leave you, my lord, old Allan, and myself the honor of fighting this battle with our own hands. I must do something to disperse the musketeers who annoy them so hard, or we shall be all shamed. Don't attempt to succor me if you see me go down, but keep at the head of your men; get off as you can, in God's name, and tell the King and the council I died in my duty!"

So saying, and commanding about twenty stout men to follow him, he gave, with this small body, a charge so desperate and unexpected that he drove the foremost of the pursuers back to some distance. In the confusion of the assault he singled out Burley, and, desirous to strike terror into his followers, he dealt him so severe a blow on the head as cut through his steel headpiece and threw him from his horse, stunned for the moment, though unwounded. A wonderful thing, it was afterward thought, that one so powerful as Balfour should have sunk under the blow of a man to appearance so slightly made as Claverhouse; and the vulgar, of course, set down to supernatural aid the effect of that energy which a determined spirit can give to a feebler arm. Claverhouse had in this last charge, however, involved himself too deeply among the insurgents, and was fairly surrounded.

Lord Evandale saw the danger of his commander, his body of dragoons being then halted, while that commanded by Allan was in the act of retreating. Regardless of Claverhouse's disinterested command to the contrary, he ordered the party which he headed to charge down hill and extricate their Colonel. Some advanced with him, most



halted and stood uncertain, many ran away. With those who followed Evandale, he disengaged Claverhouse. His assistance just came in time, for a rustic had wounded his horse in a most ghastly manner by the blow of a scythe, and was about to repeat the stroke when Lord Evandale cut him down. As they got out of the press they looked round them. Allan's division had ridden clear over the hill, that officer's authority having proved altogether unequal to halt them. Evandale's troop was scattered and in total confusion.

"What is to be done, Colonel?" said Lord Evandale.

"We are the last men in the field, I think," said Claverhouse; "and when men fight as long as they can there is no shame in flying. Hector himself would say, 'Devil take the hindmost,' when there are but twenty against a thousand. Save yourselves, my lads, and rally as soon as you can. Come, my lord, we must e'en ride for it."

So saying, he put spurs to his wounded horse; and the generous animal, as if conscious that the life of his rider depended on his exertions, pressed forward with speed, unabated either by pain or loss of blood. A few officers and soldiers followed him, but in a very irregular and tumultuary manner. The flight of Claverhouse was the signal for all the stragglers who yet offered desultory resistance to fly as fast as they could, and yield up the field of battle to the victorious insurgents.

## THE BATTLE OF SENLAC<sup>1</sup>

*Bulwer Lytton (1803-1873)*

The war now raged.

The two divisions of the invading army that included the auxiliaries had sought in vain to surround the English

<sup>1</sup> From *Harold*.

vanguard and take it in the rear: that noble phalanx had no rear. Deepest and strongest at the base of the triangle, everywhere a front opposed the foe; shields formed a rampart against the dart—spears a palisade against the horse. While that vanguard maintained its ground, William could not pierce to the entrenchments, the strength of which, however, he was enabled to perceive. He now changed his tactics, joined his knighthood to the other sections, threw his hosts rapidly into many wings, and leaving broad spaces between his archers—who continued their fiery hail—ordered his heavy-armed foot to advance on all sides upon the wedge and break its ranks for the awaiting charge of his horse.

Harold, still in the centre of the vanguard, amid the men of Kent, continued to animate them all with voice and hand; and, as the Normans now closed in, he flung himself from his steed, and strode on foot, with his mighty battle-axe, to the spot where the rush was dreadest.

Now came the shock—the fight hand to hand: spear and lance were thrown aside, axe and sword rose and shore. But before the close-serried lines of the English, with their physical strength, and veteran practice in their own special arm, the Norman foot were mowed as by the scythe. In vain, in the intervals, thundered the repeated charges of the fiery knights; in vain—throughout all, came the shaft and the bolt.

Animated by the presence of their King, fighting among them as a simple soldier, but with his eye ever quick to foresee, his voice ever prompt to warn, the men of Kent swerved not a foot from their indomitable ranks. The Norman infantry wavered and gave way; on, step by step, still unbroken in array, pressed the English. And their cry, "Out! out! Holy Crosse!" rose high above the flagging sound of "Ha Rou! Ha Rou! Notre Dame!"

"*Per la resplendar Dé*," cried William. "Our soldiers are but women in the garb of Normans. Ho, spears to the rescue! With me to the charge, Sires D'Aumale and De Littain—with me, gallant Bruse and De Mortain; with me, De Graville and Grantmesnil—*Dex aide! Notre Dame*." And heading his prowtest knights, William came, as a thunderbolt, on the bills and shields. Harold, who scarce a minute before had been in a remoter rank, was already at the brunt of that charge. At his word down knelt the foremost line, leaving naught but their shields and their spear-points against the horse. While behind them, the axe in both hands, bent forward the soldiery in the second rank, to smite and to crush. And, from the core of the wedge, poured the shafts of the archers. Down rolled in the dust half the charge of those knights. Bruse reeled on his saddle; the dread right hand of D'Aumale fell lopped by the axe; De Graville, hurled from his horse, rolled at the feet of Harold; and William, borne by his great steed and his colossal strength into the third rank—there dealt, right and left, the fierce strokes of his iron club, till he felt his horse sinking under him—and had scarcely time to back from the foe—scarcely time to get beyond reach of their weapons, ere the Spanish destrier, frightfully gashed through its strong mail, fell dead on the plain. His knights swept round him. Twenty barons leaped from selle to yield him their chargers. He chose the one nearest to hand, sprang to foot and the stirrup, and rode back to his lines. Meanwhile De Graville's casque, its strings broken by the shock, had fallen off, and as Harold was about to strike, he recognized his guest.

Holding up his hand to keep off the press of his men, the generous King said, briefly: "Rise and retreat!—no time on this field for captor and captive. He whom thou hast called recreant knight has been Saxon host. Thou has

fought by his side, thou shalt not die by his hand! Go."

Not a word spoke De Graville; but his dark eye dwelt one minute with mingled pity and reverence on the King; then, rising, he turned away; and slowly, as if he disdained to fly, strode back over the corpses of his countrymen.

"Stay, all hands!" cried the King to his archers; "yon man hath tasted our salt, and done us good service of old. He hath paid her weregeld."

Not a shaft was discharged.

Meanwhile, the Norman infantry, who had been before recoiling, no sooner saw their Duke (whom they recognized by his steed and equipment) fall on the ground, than, setting up a shout, "The Duke is dead!" they fairly turned round, and fled fast in disorder.

The fortune of the day was now well-nigh turned in favor of the Saxons; and the confusion of the Normans, as the cry of "The Duke is dead!" reached, and circled round the host would have been irrecoverable had Harold possessed a cavalry fit to press the advantage gained, or had not William himself rushed into the midst of the fugitives, throwing his helmet back on his neck, showing his face, all animated with fierce valor and disdainful wrath, while he cried aloud:

"I live, ye varlets! Behold the face of a chief who never yet forgave coward! Ay, tremble more at me than at yon English, doomed and accursed as they be! Ye Normans, ye! I blush for you!" and striking the foremost in the retreat with the flat of his sword, chiding, stimulating, threatening, promising in a breath, he succeeded in staying the flight, reforming the lines, and dispelling the general panic. Then, as he joined his own chosen knights, and surveyed the field, he beheld an opening which the advanced position of the Saxon vanguard had left, and by which

his knights might gain the entrenchments. He mused a moment, his face still bare, and brightening as he mused. Looking round him, he saw Mallet de Graville, who had remounted, and said, shortly:

"*Pardex*, dear knight, we thought you already with St. Michael! Joy, that you live yet to be an English earl. Look you, ride to Fitzosborne with the signal-word. '*Li Hardiz passent avant!*' Off, and quick!"

De Graville bowed, and darted across the plain.

"Now, my quens and chevaliers," said William, gayly, as he closed his helmet, and took from his squire another spear; "now, I shall give ye the day's great pastime. Pass the word, Sire de Tancarville, to every horseman—"Charge!—to the Standard!"

The word passed, the steeds bounded, and the whole force of William's knighthood, scouring the plain to the rear of the Saxon vanguard, made for the entrenchments.

At that sight, Harold, divining the object, and seeing this new and more urgent demand on his presence, halted the battalions over which he had presided, and, yielding the command to Leofwine, once more briefly but strenuously enjoined the troops to heed well their leaders, and on no account to break the wedge, in the form of which lay their whole strength, both against the cavalry and the greater number of the foe. Then mounting his horse, and attended only by Haco, he spurred across the plain, in the opposite direction to that taken by the Normans. In doing so he was forced to make a considerable circuit toward the rear of the entrenchments, and the farm, with its watchful groups, came in sight. He distinguished the garbs of the women, and Haco said to him:

"There wait the wives, to welcome the living victors."

"Or search their lords among the dead!" answered Harold. "Who, Haco, if we fall, will search for us?"

As the words left his lips, he saw, under a lonely thorn-tree, and scarce out of bowshot from the entrenchments, a woman seated. The King looked hard at the bended, hooded form.

"Poor wretch!" he murmured, "her heart is in the battle!" And he shouted aloud, "Farther off! farther off! the war rushes hitherward!"

At the sound of that voice the woman rose, stretched her arms, and sprang forward. But the Saxon chiefs had already turned their faces toward the neighboring ingress into the ramparts, while the tramp of rushing chargers, the shout and the roar of clashing war, drowned the wail of her feeble cry.

"I have heard him again, again!" murmured the woman. "God be praised!" and she reseated herself quietly under the lonely thorn.

As Harold and Haco sprang to their feet within the entrenchments, the shout of "the King—the King! Holy Crosse!" came in time to rally the force at the farther end, now undergoing the full storm of the Norman chivalry.

The willow ramparts were already rent and hewed beneath the hoofs of horses and the clash of swords; and the sharp points on the frontals of the Norman destriers were already gleaming within the entrenchments when Harold arrived at the brunt of action. The tide was then turned; not one of those rash riders left the entrenchments they had gained; steel and horse alike went down beneath the ponderous battle-axes; and William, again foiled and baffled, drew off his cavalry with the reluctant conviction that those breastworks, so manned, were not to be won by horse. Slowly the knights retreated down the slope of the hillock, and the English, animated by that sight, would have left their stronghold to pursue, but for the warning cry of Harold. The interval in the strife thus gained was

promptly and vigorously employed in repairing the palisades. And this done, Harold, turning to Haco, and the thegns round him, said joyously;

"By Heaven's help we shall yet win this day! And know you not that it is my fortunate day—the day on which, hitherto, all hath prospered with me, in peace and in war—the day of my birth?"

"Of your birth?" echoed Haco, in surprise.

"Ay—did you not know it?"

"Nay!—strange!—it is also the birthday of Duke William! What would astrologers say to the meeting of such stars?"

Harold's cheek paled, but his helmet concealed the paleness; his arm dropped. The strange dream of his youth again came distinct before him, as it had come in the hall of the Norman at the sight of the ghastly relics; again he saw the shadowy hand from the cloud—again heard the voice murmuring: "Lo the star that shone on the birth of the victor"; again he heard the words of Hilda interpreting the dream—again the chaunt which the dead or the fiend had poured from the rigid lips of the Vala. It boomed on his ear; hollow as a death-bell it knelled through the roar of battle:

"Never  
Crown and brow shall Force dis sever  
Till the dead men, unforgiving,  
Loose the war-steeds on the living;  
Till a sun whose race is ending  
Sees the rival stars contending,  
Where the dead men, unforgiving,  
Wheel their war-steeds round the living!"

Faded the vision, and died the chaunt, as a breath that dims, and vanishes from, the mirror of steel. The breath was gone—the firm steel was bright once more; and sud-

denly the King was recalled to the sense of the present hour by shouts and cries, in which the yell of Norman triumph predominated at the farther end of the field. The signal words to Fitzosborne had conveyed to that chief the order for the mock charge on the Saxon vanguard, to be followed by the feigned flight; and so artfully had this stratagem been practised, that despite all the solemn orders of Harold, despite even the warning cry of Leofwine, who, rash and gay-hearted though he was, had yet a captain's skill—the bold English, their blood heated by long contest and seeming victory, could not resist pursuit. They rushed forward impetuously, breaking the order of their hitherto indomitable phalanx, and the more eagerly because the Normans had unwittingly taken their way toward a part of the ground concealing dykes and ditches, into which the English trusted to precipitate the foe. It was as William's knights retreated from the breastworks that this fatal error was committed; and pointing toward the disordered Saxons with a wild laugh of revengeful joy, William set spurs to his horse and, followed by all his chivalry, joined the cavalry of Poitou and Boulogne in their swoop upon the scattered array. Already the Norman infantry had turned round—already the horses, that lay in ambush among the brushwood near the dykes, had thundered forth. The whole of the late impregnable vanguard was broken up—divided corps from corps—hemmed in; horse after horse charging to the rear, to the front, to the flank, to the right, to the left.

Gurth, with the men of Surrey and Sussex, had alone kept their ground, but they were now compelled to advance to the aid of their scattered comrades; and coming up in close order, they not only awhile stayed the slaughter, but again half turned the day. Knowing the country thoroughly, Gurth lured the foe into the ditches concealed within a hundred yards of their own ambush, and there the havoc



of the foreigners was so great that the hollows are said to have been literally made level with the plain by their corpses. Yet this combat, however fierce, and however skill might seek to repair the former error, could not be long maintained against such disparity of numbers. And meanwhile, the whole of the division under Geoffroi Martel and his co-captains had, by a fresh order of William's, occupied the space between the entrenchments and the more distant engagement; thus when Harold looked up he saw the foot of the hillocks so lined with steel as to render it hopeless that he himself could win to the aid of his vanguard. He set his teeth firmly, looked on, and only by gesture and smothered exclamations showed his emotions of hope and fear. At length he cried:

"Gallant Gurth! brave Leofwine, look to their pennons! Right, right; well fought, sturdy Vebba! Ha! they are moving this away. The wedge cleaves on—it cuts its path through the heart of the foe." And indeed, the chiefs now drawing off the shattered remains of their countrymen, still disunited, but still each section shaping itself wedge-like—on came the English, with their shields over their head, through the tempest of missiles, against the rush of the steeds here and there, through the plains, up the slopes, toward the entrenchment, in the teeth of the formidable array of Martel, and harassed behind by hosts that seemed numberless. The King could restrain himself no longer. He selected five hundred of his bravest and most practised veterans, yet comparatively fresh, and commanding the rest to stay firm, descended the hills, and charged unexpectedly into the rear of the mingled Normans and Bretons.

This sortie, well-timed though desperate, served to cover and favor the retreat of the straggling Saxons. Many, indeed, were cut off, but Gurth, Leofwine, and Vebba hewed the way for their followers to the side of Harold, and en-

tered the entrenchments, close followed by the nearer foe, who were again repulsed amid the shouts of the English.

But, alas! small indeed the band thus saved, and hopeless the thought that the small detachments of English still surviving and scattered over the plain would ever win to their aid.

Yet in those scattered remnants were, perhaps, almost the only men who, availing themselves of their acquaintance with the country, and despairing of victory, escaped by flight from the Field of SANGUELAC. Nevertheless, within the entrenchments not a man had lost heart; the day was already far advanced, no impression had been yet made on the outworks, the position seemed as impregnable as a fortress of stone; and, truth to say, even the bravest Normans were disheartened when they looked to that eminence which had foiled the charge of William himself. The Duke, in the recent *mêlée*, had received more than one wound, his third horse that day had been slain under him. The slaughter among the knights and nobles had been immense, for they had exposed their persons with the most desperate valor. And William, after surveying the rout of nearly one-half of the English army, heard everywhere, to his wrath and his shame, murmurs of discontent and dismay at the prospect of scaling the heights, in which the gallant remnant had found their refuge. At this critical juncture, Odo of Bayeux, who had hitherto remained in the rear, with the crowds of monks that accompanied the armament, rode into the field, where all the hosts were reforming their lines. He was in complete mail, but a white surplice was drawn over the steel, his head was bare, and in his right hand he bore the crozier. A formidable club swung by a leathern noose from his wrist, to be used only for self-defence: the canons forbade the priest to strike merely in assault.

Behind the milk-white steed of Odo came the whole body of reserve, fresh and unbreathed, free from the errors of their comrades, and stung into proud wrath at the delay of the Norman conquest.

"How now—how now!" cried the prelate; "do ye flag? do ye falter when the sheaves are down, and ye have but to gather up the harvest? How now, sons of the Church! warriors of the Cross! avengers of the Saints! Desert your Count, if ye please; but shrink not back from a Lord mightier than man. Lo, I come forth, to ride side by side with my brother, bare-headed, the crozier in my hand. He who fails his liege is but a coward; he who fails the Church is apostate!"

The fierce shout of the reserve closed this harangue, and the words of the prelate, as well as the physical aid he brought to back them, renerved the army. And now the whole of William's mighty host, covering the field, till its lines seemed to blend with the gray horizon, came on serried, steady, orderly—to all sides of the entrenchment. Aware of the inutility of his horse, till the breastworks were cleared, William placed in the van all his heavy-armed foot, spearmen, and archers, to open the way through the palisades, the sorties from which had now been carefully closed.

As they came up the hills, Harold turned to Haco, and said: "Where is thy battle-axe?"

"Harold," answered Haco, with more than his usual tone of sombre sadness, "I desire now to be thy shield-bearer, for thou must use thine axe with both hands while the day lasts, and thy shield is useless. Wherefore thou strike, and I will shield thee."

"Thou lovest me, then, son of Sweyn? I have sometimes doubted it."

"I love thee as the best part of my life, and with thy life

ceases mine; it is my heart that my shield guards when it covers the breast of Harold."

"I would bid thee live, poor youth," whispered Harold; "but what were life if this day were lost? Happy, then, will be those who die!"

Scarce had the words left his lips ere he sprang to the breastworks, and with a sudden sweep of his axe, down dropped a helm that peered above them. But helm after helm succeeds. Now they come on, swarm upon swarm, as wolves on a traveller, as bears round a bark. Countless, amid their carnage, on they come! The arrows of the Normans blackened the air; with deadly precision, to each arm, each limb, each front exposed above the bulwarks—whirrs the shaft. They clamber the palisades; the foremost fall dead under the Saxon axe; new thousands rush on: vain is the might of Harold—vain had been a Harold's might in every Saxon there! The first row of breastworks is forced—it is trampled, hewed, crushed down, cumbered with the dead. "Ha Rou! Ha Rou! Notre Dame! Notre Dame!" sounds joyous and shrill, the chargers snort and leap, and charge into the circle. High wheels in air the great mace of William; bright by the slaughterers flashes the crozier of the Church.

"On, Normans! Earldom and land!" cries the Duke.

"On, Sons of the Church! Salvation and heaven!" shouts the voice of Odo.

The first breastwork down—the Saxons yielding inch by inch, foot by foot, are pressed, crushed back, into the second enclosure. The same rush, and swarm, and fight, and cry, and roar. The second enclosure gives way. And now in the centre of the third—lo! before the eyes of the Normans, towers proudly aloft, and shines in the rays of the westering sun, brodered with gold, and blazing with mystic gems, the standard of England's King! And there

are gathered the reserve of the English host; there, the heroes who had never yet known defeat—unwearied they by the battle—vigorous, high-hearted still; and round them the breastworks were thicker, and stronger, and higher, and fastened by chains to pillars of wood and staves of iron, with the wagons and carts of the baggage, and piled logs of timber—barricades at which even William paused aghast, and Odo stifled an exclamation that became not a priestly lip.

Before that standard, in the front of the men, stood Gurth, and Leofwine, and Haco, and Harold, the last leaning for rest upon his axe, for he was sorely wounded in many places, and the blood oozed through the links of his mail.

Live, Harold; live yet, and Saxon England shall not die!

The English archers had at no time been numerous; most of them had served with the vanguard, and the shafts of those within the ramparts were spent; so that the foe had time to pause and to breathe. The Norman arrows meanwhile flew fast and thick, but William noted to his grief that they struck against the tall breastworks and barricades, and so failed in the slaughter they should inflict.

He mused a moment, and sent one of his knights to call to him three of the chiefs of the archers. They were soon at the side of his destrier.

"See ye not, *maladroits*," said the Duke, "that your shafts and bolts fall harmless on those osier walls? Shoot in the air; let the arrow fall perpendicular on those within—fall as the vengeance of the saints falls—direct from heaven! Give me thy bow, archer—thus." He drew the bow as he sate on his steed; the arrow flashed up, and descended in the heart of the reserve, within a few feet of the standard.

"So; that standard be your mark!" said the Duke, giving back the bow.

The archers withdrew. The order circulated through their bands, and in a few moments more down came the iron rain. It took the English host as by surprise, piercing hide cap and even iron helm; and in the very surprise that made them instinctively look up—death came.

A dull groan as from many hearts boomed from the entrenchments on the Norman ear.

"Now," said William, "they must either use their shields to guard their heads—and their axes are useless—or while they smite with the axe they fall by the shaft. On now to the ramparts! I see my crown already resting on yonder standard!"

Yet despite all, the English bear up; the thickness of the palisades, the comparative smallness of the last enclosure, more easily therefore manned and maintained by the small force of the survivors, defy other weapons than those of the bow. Every Norman who attempts to scale the breastwork is slain on the instant, and his body cast forth under the hoofs of the baffled steeds. The sun sinks near and nearer toward the red horizon.

"Courage!" cries the voice of Harold. "Hold but till nightfall, and ye are saved. Courage and freedom!"

"Harold and Holy Crosse!" is the answer.

Still foiled, William again resolves to hazard his fatal stratagem. He marked that quarter of the enclosure which was most remote from the chief point of attack—most remote from the provident watch of Harold, whose cheering voice, ever and anon, he recognized amid the hurtling clamor. In this quarter the palisades were the weakest, and the ground the least elevated; but it was guarded by men on whose skill with axe and shield Harold placed the firmest reliance—the Anglo-Danes of his old East-Anglian

earldom. Thither, then, the Duke advanced a chosen column of his heavy-armed foot, tutored especially by himself in the rehearsals of his favorite *ruse*, and accompanied by a band of archers; while at the same time he himself, with his brother Odo, headed a considerable company of knights under the son of the great Roger de Beaumont, to gain the contiguous level heights on which now stretches the little town of "Battle," there to watch and to aid the manœuvre. The foot column advanced to the appointed spot, and after a short, close, and terrible conflict succeeded in making a wide breach in the breastworks. But that temporary success only animates yet more the exertions of the beleaguered defenders, and swarming round the breach, and pouring through it, line after line of the foe drop beneath their axes. The column of the heavy-armed Normans falls back, down the slopes—they give way—they turn in disorder—they retreat—they fly; but the archers stand firm, midway on the descent—those archers seem an easy prey to the English—the temptation is irresistible. Long galled, and harassed, and maddened by the shafts, the Anglo-Danes rush forth at the heels of the Norman swordsmen, and sweeping down to exterminate the archers the breach that they leave gapes wide.

"Forward!" cries William, and he gallops toward the breach.

"Forward!" cries Odo. "I see the hands of the holy saints in the air! Forward! It is the dead that wheel our war-steeds round the living!"

On rush the Norman knights. But Harold is already in the breach, rallying around him hearts eager to replace the shattered breastworks.

"Close shields! Hold fast!" shouts his kingly voice.

Before him were the steeds of Bruse and Grantmesnil. At his breast their spears; Haco holds over the breast

the shield. Swinging aloft with both hands his axe, the spear of Grantmesnil is shivered in twain by the King's stroke. Cloven to the skull rolls the steed of Bruse. Knight and steed roll on the bloody sward.

But a blow from the sword of De Lacy has broken down the guardian shield of Haco. The son of Sweyn is stricken to his knee. With lifted blades and whirling maces the Norman knights charge through the breach.

"Look up, look up, and guard thy head!" cries the fatal voice of Haco to the King.

At that cry the King raises his flashing eyes. Why halts his stride? Why drops the axe from his hand? As he raised his head, down came the hissing death-shaft. It smote the lifted face; it crushed into the dauntless eyeball. He reeled, he staggered, he fell back several yards, at the foot of his gorgeous standard. With desperate hand he broke the head of the shaft, and left the barb, quivering in the anguish.

Gurth knelt over him.

"Fight on!" gasped the King. "Conceal my death! Holy Crosse! England to the rescue! Woe—woe!"

Rallying himself a moment, he sprang to his feet, clinched his right hand, and fell once more—a corpse.

At the same moment a simultaneous rush of horsemen toward the standard bore back a line of Saxons, and covered the body of the King with heaps of the slain.

His helmet cloven in two, his face all streaming with blood, but still calm in its ghastly hues, amid the foremost of those slain, fell the fated Haco. He fell with his head on the breast of Harold, kissed the bloody cheek with bloody lips, groaned, and died.

Inspired by despair, with superhuman strength, Gurth, striding over the corpses of his kinsmen, opposed himself singly to the knights; and the entire strength of the Eng-



lish remnant, coming round him at the menaced danger to the standard, once more drove off the assailants.

But now all the enclosure was filled with the foe; the whole space seemed gay, in the darkening air, with the banderols and banners. High through all rose the club of the Conqueror; high through all shone the crozier of the Churchman. Not one Englishman fled; all now centring round the standard, they fell, slaughtering if slaughtered. Man by man, under the charmed banner, fell the lithsmen of Hilda. Then died the faithful Sæxwolf. Then died the gallant Godrith, redeeming, by the death of many a Norman, his young fantastic love of the Norman manners. Then died, last of such of the Kent men as had won retreat from their scattered vanguard into the circle of closing slaughter, the English-hearted Vebba.

Even still in that age, when the Teuton had yet in his veins the blood of Odin, the demigod—even still one man could delay the might of numbers. Through the crowd the Normans beheld with admiring awe, here in the front of their horse, a single warrior, before whose axe spear shivered, helm drooped—there, close by the standard, standing breast high among the slain, one still more formidable, and even amid ruin unvanquished. The first fell at length under the mace of Roger de Montgomeri. So, unknown to the Norman poet (who hath preserved in his verse the deeds but not the name), fell, laughing in death, young Leofwine! Still by the enchanted standard towers the other; still the enchanted standard waves aloft, with its brave ensign of the solitary "Fighting Man," girded by the gems that had flashed in the crown of Odin.

"Thine be the honor of lowering that haughty flag," cried William, turning to one of his favorite and most famous knights, Robert de Tessin.

Overjoyed, the knight rushed forth, to fall by the axe of that stubborn defender.

"Sorcery!" cried Fitzosborne; "sorcery! This is no man, but fiend."

"Spare him, spare the brave!" cried in a breath Bruse, D'Aincourt, and De Graville.

William turned round in wrath at the cry of mercy, and, spurring over all the corpses, with the sacred banner borne by Tonstain close behind him, so that it shadowed his helmet—he came to the foot of the standard, and for one moment there was single battle between the Knight-Duke and the Saxon hero. Nor, even then, conquered by the Norman sword, but exhausted by a hundred wounds, that brave chief fell, and the falchion vainly pierced him, falling. So, last man at the standard, died Gurth.

The sun had set, the first star was in heaven, the "Fighting Man" was laid low, and on that spot where now, all forlorn and shattered, amid stagnant water, stands the altar-stone of Battle Abbey, rose the glittering dragon that surmounted the consecrated banner of the Norman victor.

### THE FLAMING TINMAN<sup>1</sup>

*George Borrow (1803–1881)*

Some mornings after I sat by my fire at the bottom of a dingle; I had just breakfasted, and had finished the last morsel of food which I had brought with me to that solitude.

"What shall I now do?" said I to myself; "shall I continue here, or decamp—this is a sad lonely spot—perhaps I had better quit it; but whither should I go? The wide

world is before me, but what can I do therein? I have been in the world already without much success."

I rose up from the stone on which I was seated, determining to go to the nearest town, with my little horse and cart, and procure what I wanted—the nearest town, according to my best calculation, lay about five miles distant; I had no doubt, however, that by using ordinary diligence, I should be back before evening. In order to go lighter, I determined to leave my tent standing as it was, and all the things which I had purchased of the tinker, just as they were. "I need not be apprehensive on their account," said I, to myself; "nobody will come here to meddle with them—the great recommendation of this place is its perfect solitude—I dare say that I could live here six months without seeing a single human visage. I will now harness my little gry and be off to the town."

At a whistle which I gave, the little gry, which was feeding on the bank near the uppermost part of the dingle, came running to me, for by this time he had become so accustomed to me that he would obey my call for all the world as if he had been one of the canine species. "Now," said I to him, "we are going to the town to buy bread for myself, and oats for you—I am in a hurry to be back; therefore, I pray you to do your best, and to draw me and the cart to the town with all possible speed, and to bring us back; if you do your best, I promise you oats on your return. You know the meaning of oats, Ambrol?"

Ambrol whinnied as if to let me know that he understood me perfectly well, as indeed he well might, as I had never once fed him during the time he had been in my possession without saying the word in question to him. Now, Ambrol, in the Gypsy tongue, signifieth a pear.

So I caparisoned Ambrol, and then, going to the cart, I removed two or three things from out it into the tent; I

then lifted up the shafts, and was just going to call to the pony to come and be fastened to them, when I thought I heard a noise.

I stood stock still, supporting the shafts of the little cart in my hand, and bending the right side of my face slightly toward the ground; but I could hear nothing; the noise which I thought I had heard was not one of those sounds I was accustomed to hear in that solitude, the note of a bird, or the rustling of a bough; it was—there I heard it again—a sound very much resembling the grating of a wheel among gravel. Could it proceed from the road? Oh no, the road was too far distant for me to hear the noise of anything moving along it. Again I listened, and now I distinctly heard the sound of wheels, which seemed to be approaching the dingle; nearer and nearer they drew, and presently the sound of wheels was blended with the murmur of voices. Anon I heard a boisterous shout, which seemed to proceed from the entrance of the dingle. “Here are folks at hand,” said I, letting the shaft of the cart fall to the ground; “is it possible that they can be coming here?”

My doubts on that point, if I entertained any, were soon dispelled; the wheels, which had ceased moving for a moment or two, were once again in motion, and were now evidently moving down the winding path which led to my retreat. Leaving my cart, I came forward and placed myself near the entrance of the open space, with my eyes fixed on the path down which my unexpected and I may say unwelcome visitors were coming. Presently I heard a stamping or sliding, as if of a horse in some difficulty; and then a loud curse, and the next moment appeared a man and a horse and cart, the former holding the head of the horse up to prevent him from falling, of which he was in danger, owing to the precipitous nature of the path. While

thus occupied, the head of the man was averted from me. When, however, he had reached the bottom of the descent, he turned his head, and perceiving me, as I stood bareheaded, without either coat or waistcoat, about two yards from him, he gave a sudden start, so violent that the backward motion of his hand had nearly flung the horse upon his haunches.

"Why don't you move forward?" said a voice from behind, apparently that of a female; "you are stopping up the way, and we shall be all down upon one another." And I saw the head of another horse overtopping the back of the cart.

"Why don't you move forward, Jack?" said another voice, also of a female, yet higher up the path.

The man stirred not, but remained staring at me in the posture which he had assumed on first perceiving me, his body very much drawn back, his left foot far in advance of his right, and with his right hand still grasping the halter of the horse, which gave way more and more, till it was clean down on its haunches.

"What is the matter?" said the voice which I had last heard.

"Get back with you, Belle, Moll," said the man, still staring at me; "here's something not over-canny or comfortable."

"What is it?" said the same voice. "Let me pass, Moll, and I'll soon clear the way," and I heard a kind of rushing down the path.

"You need not be afraid," said I, addressing myself to the man. "I mean you no harm; I am a wanderer like yourself—come here to seek for shelter—you need not be afraid; I am a Rome chabo by matriculation—one of the right sort, and no mistake—good day to ye, brother; I bids ye welcome."

The man eyed me suspiciously for a moment—then, turning to his horse with a loud curse, he pulled him up from his haunches, and led him and the cart farther down to one side of the dingle, muttering as he passed me: “Afraid! H-m!”

I do not remember ever to have seen a more ruffianly looking fellow; he was about six feet high, with an immensely athletic frame; his face was black and bluff, and sported an immense pair of whiskers, but with here and there a gray hair, for his age could not be much under fifty. He wore a faded blue frock-coat, corduroys, and highlows—on his black head was a kind of red nightcap, round his bull neck a Barcelona handkerchief. I did not like the look of the man at all.

“Afraid!” growled the fellow, proceeding to unharness his horse; “that was the word, I think.”

But other figures were now already upon the scene. Dashing past the other horse and cart, which by this time had reached the bottom of the pass, appeared an exceedingly tall woman, or, rather, girl, for she could scarcely have been above eighteen; she was dressed in a tight bodice and a blue stuff gown; hat, bonnet, or cap she had none, and her hair, which was flaxen, hung down on her shoulders unconfined; her complexion was fair, and her features handsome, with a determined but open expression. She was followed by another female, about forty, stout and vulgar-looking, at whom I scarcely glanced, my whole attention being absorbed by the tall girl.

“What’s the matter, Jack?” said the latter, looking at the man.

“Only afraid, that’s all,” said the man, still proceeding with his work.

“Afraid at what—at that lad? Why, he looks like a ghost. I would engage to thrash him with one hand.”

"You might beat me with no hands at all," said I, "fair damsel, only by looking at me. I never saw such a face and figure, both regal. Why, you look like Ingeborg, Queen of Norway; she had twelve brothers, you know, and could lick them all, though they were heroes—

"On Dovrefeld in Norway,  
Were once together seen,  
The twelve heroic brothers  
Of Ingeborg the Queen."

"None of your chaffing, young fellow," said the tall girl, "or I will give you what shall make you wipe your face; be civil, or you will rue it."

"Well, perhaps I was a peg too high," said I. "I ask your pardon—here's something a bit lower—

"As I was jawing to the gav yeck divvus  
I met on the drom miro Rommany chi—"

"None of your Rommany chies, young fellow," said the tall girl, looking more menacingly than before, and clinching her fist; "you had better be civil; I am none of your chies; and, though I keep company with gypsies, or, to speak more proper, half and halves, I would have you to know that I come of Christian blood and parents, and was born in the great house of Long Melford."

"I have no doubt," said I, "that it was a great house; judging from your size, I shouldn't wonder if you were born in a church."

"Stay, Belle," said the man, putting himself before the young virago, who was about to rush upon me, "my turn is first." Then, advancing to me in a menacing attitude, he said, with a look of deep malignity, "'Afraid' was the word, wasn't it?"

"It was," said I, "but I think I wronged you; I should

have said, aghast, you exhibited every symptom of one laboring under uncontrollable fear."

The fellow stared at me with a look of stupid ferocity and appeared to be hesitating whether to strike or not: ere he could make up his mind, the tall girl stepped forward, crying, "He's chaffing; let me at him"; and, before I could put myself on my guard, she struck me a blow on the face which had nearly brought me to the ground.

"Enough!" said I, putting my hand to my cheek; "you have now performed your promise, and made me wipe my face; now be pacified, and tell me fairly the grounds of this quarrel."

"Grounds!" said the fellow; "didn't you say I was afraid; and if you hadn't, who gave you leave to camp on my ground?"

"Is it your ground?" said I.

"A pretty question," said the fellow; "as if all the world didn't know that. Do you know who I am?"

"I guess I do," said I; "unless I am much mistaken you are he whom folks call the 'Flaming Tinman.' To tell you the truth, I'm glad we have met, for I wished to see you. These are your two wives, I suppose; I greet them. There's no harm done—there's room enough here for all of us—we shall soon be good friends, I dare say; and when we are a little better acquainted, I'll tell you my history."

"Well, if that doesn't beat all," said the fellow.

"I don't think he's chaffing now," said the girl, whose anger seemed to have subsided on a sudden; "the young man speaks civil enough."

"Civil!" said the fellow, with an oath; "but that's just like you; with you it is a blow, and all over. Civil! I suppose you would have him stay here, and get into all my secrets, and hear all I may have to say to my two morts."

"Two morts!" said the girl, kindling up; "where are they?"



Speak for one, and no more. I am no mort of yours, whatever some one else may be. I tell you one thing, Black John, or Anselo, for t'other an't your name, the same thing I told the young man here, be civil, or you will rue it."

The fellow looked at the girl furiously, but his glance soon quailed before hers; he withdrew his eyes, and cast them on my little horse, which was feeding among the trees. "What's this?" said he, rushing forward and seizing the animal. "Why, as I am alive, this is the horse of that mumping villain Slingsby."

"It's his no longer; I bought it and paid for it."

"It's mine now," said the fellow; "I swore I would seize it the next time I found it on my beat; ay, and beat the master too."

"I am not Slingsby."

"All's one for that."

"You don't say you will beat me?"

"Afraid was the word."

"I'm sick and feeble."

"Hold up your fists."

"Won't the horse satisfy you?"

"Horse nor bellows either."

"No mercy, then."

"Here's at you."

"Mind your eyes, Jack. There, you've got it! I thought so," shouted the girl, as the fellow staggered back from a sharp blow in the eye. "I thought he was chaffing at you all along."

"Never mind, Anselo. You know what to do—go in!" said the vulgar woman, who had hitherto not spoken a word, but who now came forward with all the look of a fury; "go in apopli; you'll smash ten like he."

The Flaming Tinman took her advice, and came in bent

on smashing, but stopped short on receiving a left-handed blow on the nose.

"You'll never beat the Flaming Tinman in that way," said the girl, looking at me doubtfully.

And so I began to think myself, when, in the twinkling of an eye, the Flaming Tinman, disengaging himself of his frock-coat, and dashing off his red nightcap, came rushing in more desperately than ever. To a flush hit which he received in the mouth he paid as little attention as a wild bull would have done; in a moment his arms were around me, and in another he had hurled me down, falling heavily upon me. The fellow's strength appeared to be tremendous.

"Pay him off now," said the vulgar woman. The Flaming Tinman made no reply, but planting his knee on my breast, seized my throat with two huge, horny hands. I gave myself up for dead, and probably should have been so in another minute but for the tall girl, who caught hold of the handkerchief which the fellow wore round his neck with a grasp nearly as powerful as that with which he pressed my throat.

"Do you call that fair play?" said she.

"Hands off, Belle," said the other woman; "do you call it fair play to interfere? Hands off, or I'll be down upon you myself."

But Belle paid no heed to the injunction, and tugged so hard at the handkerchief that the Flaming Tinman was nearly throttled; suddenly relinquishing his hold of me, he started on his feet, and aimed a blow at my fair pre-server, who avoided, but said coolly:

"Finish t'other business first, and then I'm your woman whenever you like; but finish it fairly—no foul play when I'm by—I'll be the boy's second, and Moll can pick up you when he happens to knock you down."

The battle during the next ten minutes raged with considerable fury, but it so happened that during this time I was never able to knock the Flaming Tinman down, but on the contrary received six knock-down blows myself. "I can never stand this," said I, as I sat on the knee of Belle; "I am afraid I must give in; the Flaming Tinman hits very hard," and I spat out a mouthful of blood.

"Sure enough you'll never beat the Flaming Tinman in the way you fight—it's of no use flipping at the Flaming Tinman with your left hand; why don't you use your right?"

"Because I'm not handy with it," said I; and then getting up, I once more confronted the Flaming Tinman, and struck him six blows for his one, but they were all left-handed blows, and the blow which the Flaming Tinman gave me knocked me off my legs.

"Now, will you use Long Melford?" said Belle, picking me up.

"I don't know what you mean by Long Melford," said I, gasping for breath.

"Why, this long right of yours," said Belle, feeling my right arm—"if you do, I shouldn't wonder if you yet stand a chance."

And now the Flaming Tinman was once more ready, much more ready than myself. I, however, rose from my second's knee as well as my weakness would permit me; on he came, striking left and right, appearing almost as fresh as to wind and spirit as when he first commenced the combat, though his eyes were considerably swelled, and his nether lip was cut in two; on he came, striking left and right, and I did not like his blows at all, or even the wind of them, which was anything but agreeable, and I gave way before him. At last he aimed a blow, which, had it taken full effect, would doubtless have ended the battle,

but owing to his slipping, the fist only grazed my left shoulder, and came with terrific force against a tree, close to which I had been driven; before the Tinman could recover himself, I collected all my strength, and struck him beneath the ear, and then fell to the ground completely exhausted, and it so happened that the blow which I struck the Tinker beneath the ear was a right-handed blow.

"Hurrah for Long Melford!" I heard Belle exclaim; "there is nothing like Long Melford for shortness all the world over."

At these words, I turned round my head as I lay, and perceived the Flaming Tinman stretched upon the ground apparently senseless. "He is dead," said the vulgar woman, as she vainly endeavored to raise him up; "he is dead; the best man in all the north country, killed in this fashion, by a boy." Alarmed at these words, I made shift to get on my feet; and, with the assistance of the woman, placed my fallen adversary in a sitting posture. I put my hand to his heart, and felt a slight pulsation. "He's not dead," said I, "only stunned; if he were let blood, he would recover presently." I produced a penknife which I had in my pocket, and, baring the arm of the Tinman, was about to make the necessary incision, when the woman gave me a violent blow, and, pushing me aside, exclaimed: "I'll tear the eyes out of your head if you offer to touch him! Do you want to complete your work, and murder him outright, now he's asleep? You have had enough of his blood already." "You are mad," said I; "I only seek to do him service. Well, if you won't let him be blooded, fetch some water and fling it into his face; you know where the pit is."

"A pretty manœuvre," said the woman; "leave my husband in the hands of you and that limmer, who has never been true to us; I should find him strangled or his throat

cut when I came back." "Do you go," said I, to the tall girl, "take the can and fetch some water from the pit." "You had better go yourself," said the girl, wiping a tear, as she looked on the yet senseless form of the Tinker; "you had better go yourself, if you think water will do him good." I had by this time somewhat recovered my exhausted powers, and, taking the can, I bent my steps as fast as I could to the pit. Arriving there, I lay down on the brink, took a long draught, and then plunged my head into the water; after which I filled the can, and bent my way back to the dingle. Before I could reach the path which led down into its depths I had to pass some way along its side. I had arrived at a part immediately over the scene of the last encounter, where the bank, overgrown with trees, sloped precipitously down. Here I heard a loud sound of voices in the dingle; I stopped, and laying hold of a tree, leaned over the bank and listened. The two women appeared to be in hot dispute in the dingle. "It was all owing to you, you limmer," said the vulgar woman to the other; "had you not interfered the old man would soon have settled the boy."

"I'm for fair play and Long Melford," said the other. "If your old man, as you call him, could have settled the boy fairly, he might, for all I should have cared, but no foul work for me; and as for sticking the boy with our gulleys when he comes back, as you proposed, I am not so fond of your old man or you that I should oblige you in it, to my soul's destruction." "Hold your tongue, or I'll—" I listened no further, but hastened as fast as I could to the dingle. My adversary had just begun to show signs of animation; the vulgar woman was still supporting him, and occasionally cast glances of anger at the tall girl, who was walking slowly up and down. I lost no time in dashing the greater part of the water into the Tinman's face,

whereupon he sneezed, moved his hands, and presently looked round him. At first his looks were dull and heavy, and without any intelligence at all; he soon, however, began to recollect himself, and to be conscious of his situation; he cast a scowling glance at me, then one of the deepest malignity at the tall girl, who was still walking about without taking much notice of what was going forward. At last he looked at his right hand, which had evidently suffered from the blow against the tree, and a half-stifled curse escaped his lips. The vulgar woman now said something to him in a low tone, whereupon he looked at her for a moment, and then got upon his legs. Again the vulgar woman said something to him; her looks were furious and she appeared to be urging him on to attempt something. I observed that she had a clasped knife in her hand. The fellow remained standing for some time as if hesitating what to do. At last he looked at his hand, and, shaking his head, said something to the woman which I did not understand. The tall girl, however, appeared to overhear him, and, probably repeating his words, said, "No, it won't do; you are right there, and now hear what I have to say—let bygones be bygones, and let us all shake hands and camp here, as the young man was saying just now." The man looked at her, and then, without any reply, went to his horse, which was lying down among the trees, and kicking it up, led it to the cart, to which he forthwith began to harness it. The other cart and horse had remained standing motionless during the whole affair which I have been recounting, at the bottom of the pass. The woman now took the horse by the head, and leading it with the cart into the open part of the dingle turned both round, and then led them back, till the horse and cart had mounted a little way up the ascent; she then stood still and appeared to be expecting the man. During this proceeding Belle

had stood looking on without saying anything; at last, perceiving that the man had harnessed his horse to the other cart, and that both he and the woman were about to take their departure, she said, "You are not going, are you?" Receiving no answer, she continued: "I tell you what, both of you, Black John, and you Moll, his mort, this is not treating me over-civilly; however, I am ready to put up with it, and go with you if you like, for I bear no malice. I'm sorry for what has happened, but you have only yourselves to thank for it. Now, shall I go with you? Only tell me." The man made no manner of reply, but flogged his horse. The woman, however, whose passions were probably under less control, replied, with a screeching tone: "Stay where you are, you jade, and may the curse of Judas cling to you—stay with the bit of a mullo whom you helped, and my only hope is that he may gulley you before he comes to be— Have you with us, indeed! after what's past; no, nor nothing belonging to you. Fetch down your mailla go-cart and live here with your chabo." She then whipped on the horse, and ascended the pass, followed by the man. The carts were light, and they were not long in ascending the winding path. I followed to see that they took their departure. Arriving at the top, I found near the entrance a small donkey-cart, which I concluded belonged to the girl. The Tinker and his mort were already at some distance. I stood looking after them for a little time; then taking the donkey by the reins I led it with the cart to the bottom of the dingle. Arrived there, I found Belle seated on the stone by the fireplace. Her hair was all dishevelled, and she was in tears.

"They were bad people," said she, "and I did not like them, but they were my only acquaintance in the wide world."

WATERLOO<sup>1</sup>*Charles Lever (1806-1872)*

It was six o'clock: the battle had continued with unchanged fortune for three hours. The French, masters of La Haye Sainte, could never advance farther into our position. They had gained the orchard of Hougoumont, but the château was still held by the British Guards, although its blazing roof and crumbling walls made its occupation rather the desperate stand of unflinching valor than the maintenance of an important position. The smoke which hung upon the field rolled in slow and heavy masses back upon the French lines, and gradually discovered to our view the entire of the army. We quickly perceived that a change was taking place in their position. The troops which on their left stretched far beyond Hougoumont were now moved nearer to the centre. The attack upon the château seemed less vigorously supported, while the oblique direction of their right wing, which, pivoting upon Planchenoit, opposed a face to the Prussians, all denoted a change in their order of battle. It was now the hour when Napoleon, at last convinced that nothing but the carnage he could no longer support could destroy the unyielding ranks of British infantry; that although Hougoumont had been partially, La Haye Sainte completely won; that upon the right of the road the farm-houses Papelotte and La Haye were nearly surrounded by his troops, which with any other army must prove the forerunner of defeat; yet still the victory was beyond his grasp. The bold stratagems, whose success the experience of a life had proved, were here to be found powerless. The decisive

<sup>1</sup> From *Charles O'Malley*.



manceuvre of carrying one important point of the enemy's lines, of turning him upon the flank, or piercing him through the centre, were here found impracticable. He might launch his avalanche of grapeshot, he might pour down his crashing columns of cavalry, he might send forth the iron storm of his brave infantry, but, though death in every shape heralded their approach, still were others found to fill the fallen ranks, and feed with their heart's blood the unslaked thirst for slaughter. Well might the gallant leader of this gallant host, as he watched the reckless onslaught of the untiring enemy, and looked upon the unflinching few who, bearing the proud badge of Britain, alone sustained the fight, well might he exclaim, "Night or Blücher!"

It was now seven o'clock, when a dark mass was seen to form upon the heights above the French centre, and divide into three gigantic columns, of which the right occupied the Brussels road. These were the reserves, consisting of the Old and Young Guards, and amounting to twelve thousand—the élite of the French army—reserved by the Emperor for a great *coup-de-main*. These veterans of a hundred battles had been stationed, from the beginning of the day, inactive spectators of the fight; their hour was now come, and, with a shout of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" which rose triumphantly over the din and crash of battle, they began their march. Meanwhile, aides-de-camp galloped along the lines, announcing the arrival of Grouchy, to reanimate the drooping spirits of the men; for, at last, a doubt of victory was breaking upon the minds of those who never before, in the most adverse hour of fortune, deemed *his* star could set that led them on to glory.

"They are coming: the attack will be made on the centre, my lord," said Lord Fitzroy Somerset, as he directed his glass upon the column. Scarcely had he spoken when the

telescope fell from his hand, as his arm, shattered by a French bullet, fell motionless to his side.

"I see it," was the cool reply of the Duke, as he ordered the Guards to deploy into line, and lie down behind the ridge, which now the French artillery had found the range of, and were laboring at their guns. In front of them the Fifty-second, Seventy-first, and Ninety-fifth were formed; the artillery stationed above and partly upon the road, loaded with grape, and waited but the word to open.

It was an awful, a dreadful moment: the Prussian cannon thundered on our left; but, so desperate was the French resistance, they made but little progress; the dark columns of the Guard had now commenced the ascent, and the artillery ceased their fire as the bayonets of the grenadiers showed themselves upon the slope. Then began that tremendous cheer from right to left of our line which those who heard never can forget. It was the impatient, long-restrained burst of unslaked vengeance. With the instinct which valor teaches, they knew the hour of trial was come; and that wild cry flew from rank to rank, echoing from the blood-stained walls of Hougoumont to the far-off valley of La Papelotte. "They come! they come!" was the cry; and the shout of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" mingled with the outburst of the British line.

Under an overwhelming shower of grape, to which succeeded a charge of cavalry of the Imperial Guard, the head of Ney's column fired its volley and advanced with the bayonet. The British artillery now opened at half range, and, although the plunging fire scathed and devastated the dark ranks of the Guards, on they came; Ney himself, on foot, at their head. Twice the leading division of that gallant column turned completely round, as the withering fire wasted and consumed them; but they were resolved to win.

Already they gained the crest of the hill, and the first line of the British were falling back before them. The artillery closes up; the flanking fire from the guns upon the road opens upon them; the head of their column breaks like a shell; the Duke seizes the moment, and advances on foot toward the ridge.

"Up, Guards, and at them!" he cried.

The hour of triumph and vengeance had arrived. In a moment the Guards were on their feet; one volley was poured in; the bayonets were brought to the charge; they closed upon the enemy; then was seen the most dreadful struggle that the history of all war can present. Furious with long restrained passion, the Guards rushed upon the leading divisions; the Seventy-first, and Ninety-fifth, and Twenty-sixth overlapped them on the flanks. Their generals fell thickly on every side: Michel, Jamier, and Mallet are killed; Friant lies wounded upon the ground; Ney, his dress pierced and ragged with balls, shouts still to advance; but the leading files waver; they fall back; the supporting division thickens; confusion, panic succeeds; the British press down; the cavalry come galloping up to their assistance; and, at last, pell-mell, overwhelmed and beaten, the French fall back upon the Old Guard. This was the decisive moment of the day. The Duke closed his glass, as he said:

"The field is won. Order the whole line to advance."

On they came, four deep, and poured like a torrent from the height.

"Let the Life Guards charge them," said the Duke; but every aide-de-camp on his staff was wounded, and I myself brought the order to Lord Uxbridge.

Lord Uxbridge had already anticipated his orders, and bore down with four regiments of heavy cavalry upon the French centre. The Prussian artillery thundered upon

their flank, and at their rear. The British bayonet was in their front; while a panic fear spread through their ranks, and the cry of "*Sauve qui peut!*" resounded on all sides. In vain Ney, the bravest of the brave; in vain Soult, Bertrand, Gourgaud, and Labedoyère burst from the broken, disorganized mass, and called on them to stand fast. A battalion of the Old Guard, with Cambronne at their head, alone obeyed the summons: forming into square, they stood between the pursuers and their prey, offering themselves a sacrifice to the tarnished honor of their arms: to the order to surrender they answered with a cry of defiance; and, as our cavalry, flushed and elated with victory, rode round their bristling ranks, no quailing look, no craven spirit was there. The Emperor himself endeavored to repair the disaster; he rode with lightning speed hither and thither, commanding, ordering, nay, imploring too; but already the night was falling, the confusion became each moment more inextricable, and the effort was a fruitless one. A regiment of the Guards and two batteries were in reserve behind Planchenoit; he threw them rapidly into position; but the overwhelming impulse of flight drove the mass upon them, and they were carried away upon the torrent of the beaten army. No sooner did the Emperor see this, his last hope, desert him, than he dismounted from his horse, and, drawing his sword, threw himself into a square, which the first regiment of chasseurs of the Old Guard had formed with a remnant of the battalion; Jerome followed him as he called out:

"You are right, brother: here should perish all who bear the name of Bonaparte."

The same moment the Prussian light artillery rend their ranks asunder, and the cavalry charge down upon the scattered fragments. A few of his staff, who never left him, place the Emperor upon a horse and fly through the death-

dealing artillery and musketry. A squadron of the Life Guards, to which I had attached myself, came up at the moment, and as Blücher's hussars rode madly here and there, where so lately the crowd of staff officers had denoted the presence of Napoleon, expressed their rage and disappointment in curses and cries of vengeance.

Cambronne's battalion stood yet unbroken, and seemed to defy every attack that was brought against them. To the second summons to surrender they replied as indignantly as at first; and Vivian's brigade was ordered to charge them. A cloud of British horse bore down on every face of the devoted square; but firm as in their hour of victory, the heroes of Marengo never quailed; and twice the bravest blood of Britain recoiled, baffled and dismayed. There was a pause for some minutes, and even then, as we surveyed our broken and blood-stained squadrons, a cry of admiration burst from our ranks at the gallant bearing of that glorious infantry. Suddenly the tramp of approaching cavalry was heard; I turned my head and saw two squadrons of the Second Life Guards. The officer who led them on was bareheaded, his long, dark hair streaming wildly behind him and upon his pale features, to which not even the headlong enthusiasm of battle had lent one touch of color. He rode straight to where I was standing, his dark eyes fixed upon me with a look so fierce, so penetrating, that I could not look away; the features, save in this respect, had almost a look of idiocy. It was Hammersly.

"Ha!" he cried, at last, "I have sought you out the entire day, but in vain. It is not yet too late. Give me your hand, boy. You once called on me to follow *you*, and I did not refuse; I trust you'll do the like by *me*. Is it not so?"

A terrible perception of his meaning shot through my

mind as I clasped his clay-cold hand in mine, and for a moment I did not speak.

"I hoped for better than this," said he, bitterly, and as a glance of withering scorn flashed from his eye. "I did trust that he who was preferred before me was at least not a coward."

As the word fell from his lips I nearly leaped from my saddle, and mechanically raised my sabre to cleave him on the spot.

"Then follow me!" shouted he, pointing with his sword to the glistening ranks before us.

"Come on," said I, with a voice hoarse with passion, while, burying my spurs in my horse's flanks, I sprang on a full length before him, and bore down upon the enemy. A loud shout, a deafening volley, the agonizing cry of the wounded and the dying, were all I heard, as my horse, rearing madly upward, plunged twice into the air, and then fell dead upon the earth, crushing me beneath his cumbrous weight, lifeless and insensible.

### THE FIGHT AT THE INN<sup>1</sup>

*Charles Reade (1814-1884)*

[Gerard and his soldier-friend, Denys, are overtaken by night upon the road; they come to a strange inn, where they are set upon by thieves.]

This delay, however, somewhat put out Denys's calculations, and evening surprised them ere they reached a little town he was making for, where was a famous hotel. However, they fell in with a roadside auberge, and Denys, seeing a buxom girl at the door, said, "This seems a decent

<sup>1</sup> From *The Cloister and the Hearth*.

inn," and led the way into the kitchen. They ordered supper, to which no objection was raised, only the landlord requested them to pay for it beforehand. It was not an uncommon proposal in any part of the world. Still it was not universal, and Denys was nettled, and dashed his hand somewhat ostentatiously into his purse, and pulled out a gold angel. "Count me the change, and speedily," said he. "You tavern-keepers are more likely to rob me than I you."

While the supper was preparing, Denys disappeared, and was eventually found by Gerard in the yard helping Manon, his plump but not bright decoy-duck, to draw water, and pouring extravagant compliments into her dullish ear. Gerard grunted and returned to table, but Denys did not come in for a good quarter of an hour.

"Uphill work at the end of a march," said he, shrugging his shoulders.

"What matters that to you?" said Gerard, dryly. "The mad dog bites all the world."

"Exaggerator. You know I bite but the fairer half. Well, here comes supper; that is better worth biting."

During supper the girl kept constantly coming in and out and looking point-blank at them, especially at Denys; and at last, in leaning over him to remove a dish, dropped a word in his ear, and he replied with a nod.

As soon as supper was cleared away Denys rose and strolled to the door, telling Gerard the sullen fair had relented, and given him a little rendezvous in the stable-yard.

Gerard suggested that the cow-house would have been a more appropriate locality. "I shall go to bed, then," said he, a little crossly. "Where is the landlord? Out at this time of night? No matter. I know our room. Shall you be long, pray?"

"Not I. I grudge leaving the fire and thee. But what

can I do? There are two sorts of invitations a Burgundian never declines."

Denys found a figure seated by the well. 'It was Manon; but instead of receiving him as he thought he had a right to expect, coming by invitation, all she did was to sob. He asked her what ailed her? She sobbed. Could he do anything for her? She sobbed.

The good-natured Denys, driven to his wit's end, which was no great distance, proffered the custom of the country by way of consolation. She repulsed him roughly. "Is this a time for fooling?" said she, and sobbed.

"You seem to think so," said Denys, waxing wroth. But the next moment he added, tenderly, "And I who could never bear to see beauty in distress."

"It is not for myself."

"Who then? your sweetheart?"

"Oh, que nenni. My sweetheart is not on earth now; and to think I have not an écu to buy masses for his soul"; and in this shallow nature the grief seemed now to be all turned in another direction.

"Come, come," said Denys; "shalt have money to buy masses for thy dead lad; I swear it. Meantime tell me why you weep."

"For you."

"For me? Art mad?"

"No. I am not mad. 'Tis you that were mad to open your purse before him."

The mystery seemed to thicken, and Denys, wearied of stirring up the mud by questions, held his peace to see if it would not clear of itself. Then the girl, finding herself no longer questioned, seemed to go through some internal combat. At last she said doggedly and aloud, "I will. The Virgin gave me courage! What matters it if they kill me, since he is dead? Soldier, the landlord is out."



"Oh, is he?"

"What, do landlords leave their taverns at this time of night? Also see what a tempest! We are sheltered here, but t'other side it blows a hurricane."

Denys said nothing.

"He is gone to fetch the band."

"The band? What band?"

"Those who will cut your throat and take your gold. Wretched man, to go and shake gold in an innkeeper's face!"

The blow came so unexpectedly it staggered even Denys, accustomed as he was to sudden perils. He muttered a single word, but in it a volume.

"Gerard!"

"Gerard! What is that? Oh, 'tis thy comrade's name, poor lad! Get him out quick ere they come, and fly to the next town."

"And thou?"

"They will kill me."

"That they shall not. Fly with us."

"'Twill avail me naught; one of the band will be sent to kill me. They are sworn to slay all who betray them."

"I'll take thee to my native place, full thirty leagues from hence, and put thee under my own mother's wing, ere they shall hurt a hair o' thy head. But first Gerard. Stay thou here while I fetch him."

As he was darting off, the girl seized him convulsively, and with all the iron strength excitement lends to women.

"Stay me not! for pity's sake," he cried; "'tis life or death."

"'Sh!—'sh!" whispered the girl, shutting his mouth hard with her hand, and putting her pale lips close to him, and her eyes, that seemed to turn backward, straining toward some indistinct sound.

He listened.

He heard footsteps, many footsteps; and no voices. She whispered in his ear "THEY ARE COME," and trembled like a leaf.

Denys felt it was so. Travellers in that number would never have come in dead silence.

The feet were now at the very door.

"How many?" said he, in a hollow whisper.

"Hush!" and she put her mouth to his very ear.

And who, that had seen this man and woman in that attitude, would have guessed what freezing hearts were theirs, and what terrible whispers passed between them?

"Seven."

"How armed?"

"Sword and dagger; and the giant with his axe. They call him the Abbot."

"And my comrade?"

"Nothing can save him. Better lose one life than two. Fly!"

Denys's blood froze at this cynical advice. "Poor creature, you know not a soldier's heart."

He put his head in his hands a moment, and a hundred thoughts of dangers baffled whirled through his brain.

"Listen, girl! There is one chance for our lives, if thou wilt but be true to us. Run to the town; to the nearest tavern, and tell the first soldier there that a soldier here is sore beset, but armed, and his life to be saved if they will but run. Then to the bailiff. But first to the soldiers. Nay, not a word, but buss me, good lass, and fly! men's lives hang on thy heels."

She kilted up her gown to run. He came round to the road with her; saw her cross the road cringing with fear, then glide away, then turn into an erect shadow, then melt away in the storm.

And now he must get to Gerard. But how? He had to run the gauntlet of the whole band. He asked himself what was the worst thing they could do. For he had learned in war that an enemy does not what you hope he will do, but what you hope he will not do. "Attack me as I enter the kitchen! Then I must not give them time."

Just as he drew near to the latch a terrible thought crossed him. "Suppose they had already dealt with Gerard. Why, then," thought he, "naught is left but to kill and be killed": and he strung his bow, and walked rapidly into the kitchen. There were seven hideous faces seated round the fire, and the landlord pouring them out neat brandy, blood's forerunner in every age.

"What, company!" cried Denys, gayly; "one minute, my lads, and I'll be with you"; and he snatched up a lighted candle off the table, opened the door that led to the staircase, and went up it halloing. "What, Gerard! whither hast thou skulked to?" There was no answer. He halloed louder, "Gerard, where art thou?"

After a moment, in which Denys lived an hour in agony, a peevish, half-inarticulate noise issued from the room at the head of the little stairs. Denys burst in, and there was Gerard asleep.

"Thank God!" he said, in a choking voice; then began to sing loud, untuneful ditties. Gerard put his fingers into his ears; but presently he saw in Denys's face a horror that contrasted strangely with this sudden merriment.

"What ails thee?" said he, sitting up and staring.

"Hush!" said Denys, and his hand spoke even more plainly than his lips. "Listen to me."

Denys, then pointing significantly to the door, to show Gerard sharp ears were listening hard by, continued his song aloud, but under cover of it threw in short, muttered syllables.

"(Our lives are in peril.)

"(Thieves.)

"(Thy doublet.)

"(Thy sword.)

"(Aid.)

"(Coming.)

"(Put off time.)" Then aloud:

"Well, now, wilt have t'other bottle? [Say nay.]"

"No, not I."

"But I tell thee there are half a dozen jolly fellows.  
[Tired.]"

"Ay, but I am too wearied," said Gerard. "Go thou."

"Nay, nay!" Then he went to the door and called out cheerfully, "Landlord, the young milksop will not rise. Give those honest fellows t'other bottle. I will pay for 't in the morning."

He heard a brutal and fierce chuckle.

Having thus by observation made sure the kitchen door was shut, and the miscreants were not actually listening, he examined the chamber door closely; then quietly shut it, but did not bolt it, and went and inspected the window.

It was too small to get out of, and yet a thick bar of iron had been let in the stone to make it smaller; and, just as he made this chilling discovery, the outer door of the house was bolted with a loud clang.

Denys groaned. "The beasts are in the shambles."

But would the thieves attack them while they were awake? Probably not.

Not to throw away this their best chance, the poor souls now made a series of desperate efforts to converse as if discussing ordinary matters, and by this time Gerard learned all that had passed, and that the girl was gone for aid.

"Pray Heaven she may not lose heart by the way" said Denys, sorrowfully.

And Denys begged Gerard's forgiveness for bringing him out of his way for this. Gerard forgave him.

"I would fear them less, Gerard, but for one they call the Abbot. I picked him out at once. Taller than you, bigger than us both put together. Fights with an axe. Gerard, a man to lead a herd of deer to battle. I shall kill that man to-night, or he will kill me. I think somehow 'tis he will kill me."

"Saints forbid! Shoot him at the door! What avails his strength against your weapon?"

"I shall pick him out; but if it comes to hand-fighting, run swiftly under his guard, or you are a dead man. I tell thee neither of us may stand a blow of that axe; thou never sawest such a body of a man."

Gerard was for bolting the door; but Denys with a sigh showed him that half the door-post turned outward on a hinge, and the great bolt was little more than a blind. "I have forborne to bolt it," said he, "that they may think us the less suspicious."

Near an hour rolled away thus. It seemed an age. Yet it was but a little hour; and the town was a league distant. And some of the voices in the kitchen became angry and impatient.

"They will not wait much longer," said Denys, "and we have no chance at all unless we surprise them."

"I will do whate'er you bid," said Gerard, meekly.

There was a cupboard on the same side as the door, but between it and the window. It reached nearly to the ground, but not quite. Denys opened the cupboard door and placed Gerard on a chair behind it. "If they run for the bed, strike at the napes of their necks! A sword-cut there always kills or disables." He then arranged the bolsters and their shoes in the bed so as to deceive a person peeping from a distance, and drew the short curtains at the head.

Meantime Gerard was on his knees. Denys looked round and saw him.

"Ah!" said Denys, "above all, pray them to forgive me for bringing you into this guetapens!"

And now they grasped hands and looked in one another's eyes. Oh, such a look! Denys's hand was cold, and Gerard's warm.

They took their posts.

Denys blew out the candle.

"We must keep silence now."

But in the terrible tension of their nerves and very souls they found they could hear a whisper fainter than any man could catch at all outside that door. They could hear each other's hearts thump at times.

"Good news!" breathed Denys, listening at the door.

"They are casting lots."

"Pray that it may be the Abbot."

"Yes. Why?"

"If he comes alone I can make sure of him."

"Denys!"

"Ay!"

"I fear I shall go mad, if they do not come soon."

"Shall I feign sleep? Shall I snore?"

"Will that—?"

"Perhaps."

"Do then, and God have mercy on us!"

Denys snored at intervals.

There was a scuffling of feet heard in the kitchen, and then all was still.

Denys snored again; then took up his position behind the door.

But he, or they, who had drawn the lot, seemed deter-

mined to run no foolish risks. Nothing was attempted in a hurry.

When they were almost starved with cold and waiting for the attack, the door on the stairs opened softly and closed again. Nothing more.

There was another harrowing silence.

Then a single, light footstep on the stairs; and nothing more.

Then a light crept under the door; and nothing more.

Presently there was a gentle scratching, not half so loud as a mouse's, and the false door-post opened by degrees and left a perpendicular space, through which the light streamed in. The door, had it been bolted, would now have hung by the bare tip of the bolt, which went into the real door-post, but, as it was, it swung gently open of itself. It opened inward, so Denys did not raise his cross-bow from the ground, but merely grasped his dagger.

The candle was held up, and shaded from behind by a man's hand.

He was inspecting the beds from the threshold, satisfied that his victims were both in bed.

The man glided into the apartment. But at the first step something in the position of the cupboard and chair made him uneasy. He ventured no farther, but put the candle on the floor and stooped to peer under the chair; but, as he stooped, an iron hand grasped his shoulder, and a dagger was driven so fiercely through his neck that the point came out at his gullet. There was a terrible hic-cough, but no cry, and half a dozen silent strokes followed in swift succession, each a death-blow, and the assassin was laid noiselessly on the floor.

Denys closed the door, bolted it gently, drew the post

to, and, even while he was doing it, whispered Gerard to bring a chair. It was done.

"Help me set him up."

"Dead?"

"Parbleu!"

"What for?"

"Frighten them! Gain time."

Even while saying this, Denys had whipped a piece of string round the dead man's neck and tied him to the chair, and there the ghastly figure sat, fronting the door.

"Denys, I can do better. Saints forgive me!"

"What? Be quick, then, we have not many moments."

And Denys got his cross-bow ready, and, tearing off his straw mattress, reared it before him, and prepared to shoot the moment the door should open, for he had no hope any more would come singly, when they found the first did not return.

While thus employed, Gerard was busy about the seated corpse, and, to his amazement, Denys saw a luminous glow spreading rapidly over the white face.

Gerard blew out the candle. And on this the corpse's face shone still more like a glow-worm's head.

Denys shook in his shoes, and his teeth chattered.

"What in Heaven's name is this?" he whispered.

"Hush! 'tis but phosphorus. But 'twill serve."

"Away! they will surprise thee."

In fact, uneasy mutterings were heard below, and at last a deep voice said, "What makes him so long? Is the drôle rifling them?"

It was their comrade they suspected, then, not the enemy. Soon a step came softly but rapidly up the stairs; the door was gently tried.

When this resisted, which was clearly not expected, the



sham post was very cautiously moved, and an eye, no doubt, peeped through the aperture; for there was a howl of dismay, and the man was heard to stumble back and burst into the kitchen, where a Babel of voices rose directly on his return.

Gerard ran to the dead thief, and began to work on him again.

"Back, madman!" whispered Denys.

"Nay, nay. I know these ignorant brutes. They will not venture here awhile. I can make him ten times more fearful."

"At least close that opening! Let them not see you at your devilish work."

Gerard closed the sham post, and in half a minute his brush made the dead head a sight to strike any man with dismay. He put his art to a perhaps strange use, and one unparalleled in the history of mankind. He illuminated his dead enemy's face to frighten his living foe; the staring eyeballs he made globes of fire; the teeth he left white, for so they were more terrible by the contrast, but the palate and tongue he tipped with fire, and made one lurid cavern of the red depths the chapfallen jaw revealed; and on the brow he wrote in burning letters, "LA MORT." And, while he was doing it, the stout Denys was quaking, and fearing the vengeance of Heaven; for one man's courage is not another's; and the band of miscreants below were quarrelling and disputing loudly, and now without disguise.

The steps that led down to the kitchen were fifteen, but they were nearly perpendicular; there was, therefore, in point of fact, no distance between the besiegers and besieged, and the latter now caught almost every word. At last one was heard to cry out, "I tell ye the Devil has got him and branded him with hell-fire. I am more like to

leave this cursed house than go again into a room that is full of fiends."

"Art drunk, or mad, or a coward?" said another.

"Call me a coward, I'll give thee my dagger's point, and send thee where Pierre sits o' fire forever."

"Come, no quarrelling when work is afoot," roared a tremendous diapason, "or I'll brain ye both with my fist, and send ye where we shall all go soon or late."

"The Abbot," whispered Denys, gravely.

He felt the voice he had just heard could belong to no man but the colossus he had seen in passing through the kitchen. It made the place vibrate. The quarrelling continued some time, and then there was a dead silence.

"Look out, Gerard!"

"Ay. What will they do next?"

"We shall soon know."

"Shall I wait for you, or cut down the first that opens the door?"

"Wait for me, lest we strike the same, and waste a blow. Alas! we can't afford that."

Dead silence.

Sudden came into the room a thing that made them start and their hearts quiver.

And what was it? A moonbeam.

Even so can this machine, the body, by the soul's action be strung up to start and quiver. The sudden ray shot keen and pure into that shamble.

Its calm, cold, silvery soul traversed the apartment in a stream of no great volume, for the window was narrow.

After the first tremor, Gerard whispered, "Courage,

Denys! God's eye is on us even here." And he fell upon his knees, with his face turned toward the window.

Ay, it was like a holy eye opening suddenly on human crime and human passions. Many a scene of blood and crime that pure cold eye has rested on; but on few more ghastly than this, where two men, with a lighted corpse between them, waited panting to kill and be killed. Nor did the moonlight deaden that horrible corpse-light. If anything, it added to its ghastliness; for the body sat at the edge of the moonbeam, which cut sharp across the shoulder and the ear, and seemed blue and ghastly and unnatural by the side of that lurid glow in which the face and eyes and teeth shone horribly. But Denys dared not look that way.

The moon drew a broad stripe of light across the door and on that his eyes were glued. Presently he whispered, "Gerard!"

Gerard looked and raised his sword.

Acutely as they had listened, they had heard of late no sound on the stair. Yet there—on the door-post, at the edge of the stream of moonlight, were the tips of the fingers of a hand.

The nails glistened.

Presently they began to crawl and crawl down toward the bolt, but with infinite slowness and caution. In so doing they crept into the moonlight. The actual motion was imperceptible, but slowly, slowly the fingers came out whiter and whiter; but the hand between the main knuckles and the wrist remained dark. Denys slowly raised his cross-bow.

He levelled it. He took a long, steady aim.

Gerard palpitated. At last the cross-bow twanged. The hand was instantly nailed, with a stern jar, to the

quivering door-post. There was a scream of anguish. "Cut," whispered Denys eagerly, and Gerard's uplifted sword descended and severed the wrist with two swift blows. A body sank down moaning outside.

The hand remained inside, immovable, with blood trickling from it down the wall. The fierce bolt, slightly barbed, had gone through it, and deep into the real door-post.

"Two," said Denys, with terrible cynicism.

He strung his cross-bow, and kneeled behind his cover again.

"The next will be the Abbot."

The wounded man moved, and presently crawled down to his companions on the stairs, and the kitchen door was shut.

There nothing was heard now but low muttering. The last incident had revealed the mortal character of the weapons used by the besieged.

"I begin to think the Abbot's stomach is not so great as his body," said Denys.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when the following events happened in a couple of seconds: The kitchen door was opened roughly, a heavy but active man darted up the steps without any manner of disguise, and a single ponderous blow sent the door, not only off its hinges, but right across the room on to Denys's fortification, which it struck so rudely as nearly to lay him flat. And in the doorway stood a colossus with a glittering axe.

He saw the dead man with the moon's blue light on half his face, and the red light on the other half and inside his chapfallen jaws; he stared, his arms fell, his knees knocked together, and he crouched with horror.

"LA MORT!" he cried, in tones of terror, and turned and fled. In which act Denys started up and shot him through both jaws. He sprang with one bound into the

kitchen, and there leaned on his axe, spitting blood and teeth and curses.

Denys strung his bow, and put his hand into his breast. He drew it out dismayed.

"My last bolt is gone!" he groaned.

"But we have our swords, and you have slain the giant."

"No, Gerard," said Denys, gravely, "I have not. And the worst is, I have wounded him. Fool! to shoot at a retreating lion. He had never faced thy handiwork again but for my meddling."

"Ha! to your guard! I hear them open the door."

Then Denys, depressed by the one error he had committed in all this fearful night, felt convinced his last hour had come. He drew his sword, but like one doomed. But what is this? A red light flickers on the ceiling. Gerard flew to the window and looked out. There were men with torches, and breastplates gleaming red. "We are saved! Armed men!" And he dashed his sword through the window, shouting, "Quick! quick! we are sore pressed!"

"Back!" yelled Denys; "they come! strike none but him!"

That very moment the Abbot and two men with naked weapons rushed into the room. Even as they came the outer door was hammered fiercely, and the Abbot's comrades, hearing it, and seeing the torchlight, turned and fled. Not so the terrible Abbot; wild with rage and pain, he spurned his dead comrade, chair and all, across the room; then, as the men faced him on each side with kindling eyeballs, he waved his tremendous axe like a feather right and left, and cleared a space, then lifted it to hew them both in pieces.

His antagonists were inferior in strength, but not in swiftness and daring, and above all they had settled how

to attack him. The moment he reared his axe they flew at him like cats, and both together. If he struck a full blow with his weapon he would most likely kill one, but the other would certainly kill him; he saw this, and, intelligent as well as powerful, he thrust the handle fiercely in Denys's face, and, turning, jabbed with the steel at Gerard. Denys went staggering back, covered with blood. Gerard had rushed in like lightning, and, just as the axe turned to descend on him, drove his sword so fiercely through the giant's body that the very hilt sounded on his ribs like the blow of a pugilist, and Denys, staggering back to help his friend, saw a steel point come out of the Abbot behind.

The stricken giant bellowed like a bull, dropped his axe, and, clutching Gerard's throat tremendously, shook him like a child. Then Denys, with a fierce snarl, drove his sword into the giant's back. "Stand firm now!" and he pushed the cold steel through and through the giant and out at his breast.

Thus horribly spitted on both sides, the Abbot gave a violent shudder, and his heels hammered the ground convulsively. His lips, fast turning blue, opened wide and deep, and he cried, "LA MORT! LA MORT! LA MORT!" the first time in a roar of despair, and then twice in a horror-stricken whisper never to be forgotten.

Just then the street door was forced.

Suddenly the Abbot's arms whirled like windmills, and his huge body wrenched wildly and carried them to the doorway, twisting their wrists, and nearly throwing them off their legs.

"He'll win clear yet," cried Denys; "out steel! and in again!"

They tore out their smoking swords, but, ere they could stab again, the Abbot leaped full five feet high, and fell with a tremendous crash against the door below, carrying

it away with him like a sheet of paper, and through the aperture the glare of torches burst on the awestruck faces above, half blinding them.

The thieves at the first alarm had made for the back door, but, driven thence by a strong guard, ran back to the kitchen, just in time to see the lock forced out of the socket and half a dozen mailed archers burst in upon them. On these in pure despair they drew their swords.

But ere a blow was struck on either side the staircase door behind them was battered into their midst with one ponderous blow, and with it the Abbot's body came flying, hurled, as they thought, by no mortal hand, and rolled on the floor, spouting blood from back and bosom in two furious jets, and quivered, but breathed no more.

The thieves, smitten with dismay, fell on their knees directly, and the archers bound them, while, above, the rescued ones still stood like statues rooted to the spot, their dripping swords extended in the red torchlight, expecting their indomitable enemy to leap back on them as wonderfully as he had gone.

## HOW THEY TOOK THE GOLD-TRAIN<sup>1</sup>

*Charles Kingsley (1819-1875)*

[Amyas Leigh and his company of adventurers have sailed from Devon to South America that they may take vengeance on the Spaniards and rob them of their gold. Having abandoned their ship on the east coast, they are journeying overland through the forest toward the Pacific, when they surprise the gold-train from Santa Fé.]

<sup>1</sup> From *Westward Ho!*

A fortnight or more had passed in severe toil; but not more severe than they have endured many a time before. Bidding farewell once and forever to the green ocean of the eastern plains, they have crossed the Cordilleras; they have taken a longing glance at the city of Santa Fé, lying in the midst of rich gardens on its lofty mountain plateau, and have seen, as was to be expected, that it was far too large a place for any attempt of theirs. But they have not altogether thrown away their time. Their Indian lad has discovered that a gold-train is going down from Santa Fé toward the Magdalena; and they are waiting for it beside the miserable rut which serves for a road, encamped in a forest of oaks which would make them almost fancy themselves back again in Europe were it not for the tree-ferns which form the undergrowth, and were it not, too, for the deep gorges opening at their very feet, in which, while their brows are swept by the cool breezes of a temperate zone, they can see far below, dim through their everlasting vapor-bath of rank, hot steam, the mighty forms and gorgeous colors of the tropic forest.

They have pitched their camp among the tree-ferns, above a spot where the path winds along a steep hillside, with a sheer cliff below of many hundred feet. There was a road there once, perhaps, when Cundinamarca was a civilized and cultivated kingdom; but all which Spanish misrule has left of it are a few steps slipping from their places at the bottom of a narrow ditch of mud. It has gone the way of the aqueducts, and bridges, and post-houses, the gardens, and the llama-flocks of that strange empire. In the mad search for gold every art of civilization has fallen to decay, save architecture alone; and that survives only in the splendid cathedrals which have risen upon the ruins of the temples of the Sun, in honor of a milder Pantheon; if, indeed, that can be called a milder



one which demands (as we have seen already) human sacrifices, unknown to the gentle nature-worship of the Incas.

And now the rapid tropic vegetation has reclaimed its old domains, and Amyas and his crew are as utterly alone, within a few miles of an important Spanish settlement, as they would be in the solitudes of the Orinoco or the Amazon.

In the meanwhile all their attempts to find sulphur and nitre have been unavailing: and they have been forced to depend after all (much to Yeo's disgust) upon their swords and arrows. Be it so: Drake took Nombre de Dios and the gold-train there with no better weapons; and they may do as much.

So, having blocked up the road above by felling a large tree across it, they sit there among the flowers chewing coca, in default of food and drink, and meditating among themselves the cause of a mysterious roar which has been heard nightly in their wake ever since they left the banks of the Meta. Jaguar it is not, nor monkey: it is unlike any sound they know; and why should it follow them? However, they are in the land of wonders; and, moreover, the gold-train is far more important than any noise.

At last, up from beneath, there was a sharp crack and a loud cry. The crack was neither the snapping of a branch nor the tapping of a woodpecker; the cry was neither the scream of the parrot nor the howl of the monkey.

"That was a whip's crack," said Yeo, "and a woman's wail. They are close here, lads!"

"A woman's? Do they drive women in their gangs?" asked Amyas.

"Why not, the brutes? There they are, sir. Did you see their basnets glitter?"

"Men!" said Amyas, in a low voice, "I trust you all not

to shoot till I do. Then give them one arrow, out swords, and at them! Pass the word along."

Up they came, slowly, and all hearts beat loud at their coming.

First, about twenty soldiers, only one-half of whom were on foot, the other half being borne, incredible as it may seem, each in a chair on the back of a single Indian, while those who marched had consigned their heaviest armor and their arquebuses into the hands of attendant slaves, who were each pricked on at will by the pikes of the soldier behind them.

"The men are mad to let their ordnance out of their hands."

"Oh, sir, an Indian will pray to an arquebus not to shoot him; be sure their artillery is safe enough," said Yeo.

"Look at the proud villains," whispered another, "to make dumb beasts of human creatures like that!"

"Ten shot," counted the business-like Amyas, "and ten pikes; Will can tackle them up above."

Last of this troop came some inferior officer, also in his chair, who, as he went slowly up the hill, with his face turned toward the gang which followed, drew every other second the cigar from his lips, to inspirit them with those pious ejaculations to the various objects of his worship, divine, human, anatomic, wooden, and textile, which earned for the pious Spaniards of the sixteenth century the uncharitable imputation of being at once the most fetich-ridden idolaters, and the most abominable swearers of all Europeans.

"The blasphemous dog!" said Yeo, fumbling at his bow-string, as if he longed to send an arrow through him. But Amyas had hardly laid his finger on the impatient veteran's arm, when another procession followed, which made them forget all else.

A sad and hideous sight it was; yet one too common even then in those remoter districts, where the humane edicts were disregarded, which the prayers of Dominican friars (to their everlasting honor be it spoken) had wrung from the Spanish sovereigns, and which the legislation of that most wise, virtuous, and heroic Inquisitor (paradoxical as the words may seem), Pedro de la Gasca, had carried into effect in Peru—futile and tardy alleviations of cruelties and miseries unexampled in the history of Christendom, or perhaps on earth, save in the conquests of Sennacherib and Zinghis-Khan. But on the frontiers, where negroes were imported to endure the toil which was found fatal to the Indian, and all Indian tribes convicted (or suspected) of cannibalism were hunted down for the salvation of their souls and the enslavement of their bodies, such scenes as these were still too common; and, indeed, if we are to judge from Humboldt's impartial account, were not very much amended even at the close of the last century, in those much-boasted Jesuit missions in which (as many of them as existed anywhere but on paper) military tyranny was super-added to monastic, and the Gospel preached with fire and sword, almost as shamelessly as by the first Conquistadores.

A line of Indians, Negroes, and Zambos, naked, emaciated, scarred with whips and fetters, and chained together by their left wrists, toiled upward, panting and perspiring under the burden of a basket held up by a strap which passed across their foreheads. Yeo's sneer was but too just; there were not only old men and youths among them, but women; slender young girls, mothers with children running at their knees; and, at the sight, a low murmur of indignation rose from the ambushed Englishmen, worthy of the free and righteous hearts of those days, when Raleigh could appeal to man and God, on the ground of a

common humanity, in behalf of the outraged heathens of the New World; when Englishmen still knew that man was man, and that the instinct of freedom was the righteous voice of God; ere the hapless seventeenth century had brutalized them also by bestowing on them, amid a hundred other bad legacies, the fatal gift of negro slaves.

But the first forty, so Amyas counted, bore on their backs a burden which made all, perhaps, but him and Yeo, forget even the wretches who bore it. Each basket contained a square package of carefully corded hide; the look whereof friend Amyas knew full well.

"What's in they, captain?"

"Gold!" And at that magic word all eyes were strained greedily forward, and such a rustle followed that Amyas, in the very face of detection, had to whisper:

"Be men, be men, or you will spoil all yet!"

The last twenty, or so, of the Indians bore larger baskets, but more lightly freighted, seemingly with manioc, and maize-bread, and other food for the party; and after them came, with their bearers and attendants, just twenty soldiers more, followed by the officer in charge, who smiled away in his chair, and twirled two huge mustachios, thinking of nothing less than of the English arrows which were itching to be away and through his ribs. The ambush was complete; the only question how and when to begin?

Amyas had a shrinking, which all will understand, from drawing bow in cool blood on men so utterly unsuspecting and defenceless, even though in the very act of devilish cruelty—for devilish cruelty it was, as three or four drivers armed with whips lingered up and down the slowly staggering file of Indians, and avenged every moment's lagging, even every stumble, by a blow of the cruel manati-hide, which cracked like a pistol-shot against the naked limbs of the silent and uncomplaining victim.

Suddenly the *casus belli*, as usually happens, arose of its own accord.

The last but one of the chained line was an old, gray-headed man, followed by a slender, graceful girl of some eighteen years old, and Amyas's heart yearned over them as they came up. Just as they passed, the foremost of the file had rounded the corner above; there was a bustle, and a voice shouted, "Halt, señors! there is a tree across the path!"

"A tree across the path?" bellowed the officer, with a variety of passionate addresses to the Mother of Heaven, the fiends of hell, Saint Jago of Compystella, and various other personages; while the line of trembling Indians, told to halt above, and driven on by blows below, surged up and down upon the ruinous steps of the Indian road, until the poor old man fell grovelling on his face.

The officer leaped down, and hurried upward to see what had happened. Of course, he came across the old man.

"Sin peccado concebida! Grandfather of Beelzebub, is this a place to lie worshipping your fiends?" and he pricked the prostrate wretch with the point of his sword.

The old man tried to rise; but the weight on his head was too much for him; he fell again, and lay motionless.

The driver applied the manati-hide across his loins, once, twice, with fearful force; but even that specific was useless.

"Gastado, Señor Capitan," said he, with a shrug. "Used up. He has been failing these three months!"

"What does the intendant mean by sending me out with worn-out cattle like these? Forward there!" shouted he. "Clear away the tree, señors, and I'll soon clear the chain. Hold it up, Pedrillo!"

The driver held up the chain, which was fastened to the old man's wrist. The officer stepped back, and flourished

round his head a Toledo blade, whose beauty made Amyas break the Tenth Commandment on the spot.

The man was a tall, handsome, broad-shouldered, high-bred man; and Amyas thought that he was going to display the strength of his arm, and the temper of his blade, in severing the chain at one stroke.

Even he was not prepared for the recondite fancies of a Spanish adventurer, worthy son or nephew of those first conquerors, who used to try the keenness of their swords upon the living bodies of Indians, and regale themselves at meals with the odor of roasting *caciques*.

The blade gleamed in the air, once, twice, and fell: not on the chain, but on the wrist which it fettered. There was a shriek—a crimson flash—and the chain and its prisoner were parted indeed.

One moment more, and Amyas's arrow would have been through the throat of the murderer, who paused, regarding his workmanship with a satisfied smile; but vengeance was not to come from him.

Quick and fierce as a tiger-cat, the girl sprang on the ruffian, and with the intense strength of passion clasped him in her arms, and leaped with him from the narrow ledge into the abyss below.

There was a rush, a shout; all faces were bent over the precipice. The girl hung by her chained wrist; the officer was gone. There was a moment's awful silence; and then Amyas heard his body crashing through the tree-tops far below.

"Haul her up! Hew her in pieces! Burn the witch!" and the driver, seizing the chain, pulled at it with all his might, while all, springing from their chairs, stooped over the brink.

Now was the time for Amyas! Heaven had delivered them into his hands. Swift and sure, at ten yards off, his

arrow rushed through the body of the driver, and then, with a roar as of the leaping lion, he sprang like an avenging angel into the midst of the astonished ruffians.

His first thought was for the girl. In a moment, by sheer strength, he had jerked her safely up into the road, while the Spaniards recoiled right and left, fancying him for the moment some mountain giant or supernatural foe. His hurrah undeceived them in an instant, and a cry of "English! Lutheran dogs!" arose, but arose too late. The men of Devon had followed their captain's lead; a storm of arrows left five Spaniards dead, and a dozen more wounded, and down leaped Salvation Yeo, his white hair streaming behind him, with twenty good swords more, and the work of death began.

The Spaniards fought like lions; but they had no time to fix their arquebuses on the crutches; no room, in that narrow path, to use their pikes. The English had the wall of them; and to have the wall there was to have the foe's life at their mercy. Five desperate minutes, and not a living Spaniard stood upon those steps; and certainly no living one lay in the green abyss below. Two only, who were behind the rest, happening to be in full armor, escaped without mortal wound, and fled down the hill again.

"After them! Michael Evans and Simon Heard! and catch them if they run a league."

The two long and lean Clovelly men, active as deer from forest training, ran two feet for the Spaniards' one; and in ten minutes returned, having done their work; while Amyas and his men hurried past the Indians to help Cary and the party forward, where shouts and musket-shots announced a sharp affray.

Their arrival settled the matter. All the Spaniards fell but three or four, who scrambled down the crannies of the cliff.

"Let not one of them escape! Slay them as Israel slew Amalek!" cried Yeo, as he bent over; and ere the wretches could reach a place of shelter, an arrow was quivering in each body, as it rolled lifeless down the rocks.

"Now then! Loose the Indians!"

They found armorer's tools on one of the dead bodies, and it was done.

"We are your friends," said Amyas. "All we ask is that you shall help us to carry this gold down to the Magdalena, and then you are free."

Some few of the younger grovelled at his knees, and kissed his feet, hailing him as the child of the Sun; but the most part kept a stolid indifference, and when freed from their fetters sat quietly down where they stood, staring into vacancy. The iron had entered too deeply into their souls. They seemed past hope, enjoyment, even understanding.

But the young girl, who was last of all in the line, as soon as she was loosed sprang to her father's body, speaking no word, lifted it in her thin arms, laid it across her knees, kissed the fallen lips, stroked the furrowed cheeks, murmured inarticulate sounds like the cooing of a woodland dove, of which none knew the meaning but she, and he who heard not, for his soul had long since fled. Suddenly the truth flashed on her; silent as ever, she drew one long, heaving breath, and rose erect, the body in her arms. Another moment, and she had leaped into the abyss.

They watched her dark and slender limbs, twined closely round the old man's corpse, turn over, and over, and over till a crash among the leaves, and a scream among the birds, told that she had reached the trees; and the green roof hid her from their view.



THE LAST FIGHT OF CARVER DOONE<sup>1</sup>*R. D. Blackmore (1825-1900)*

[The Doones are a family of outlaws and robbers who have harried the country far and wide. John Ridd has attacked and all but exterminated them; from among their number he has won Lorna Doone, his bride, whom he is just marrying when Carver, the last of the Doones, rides up and fires.]

The sound of a shot rang through the church.

Lorna fell across my knees when I was going to kiss her, as the bridegroom is allowed to do, and encouraged, if he needs it; a flood of blood came out upon the yellow wood of the altar steps; and at my feet lay Lorna, trying to tell me some last message out of her faithful eyes. I lifted her up, and petted her, and coaxed her, but it was no good; the only sign of life remaining was a spirit of bright-red blood.

Some men know what things befall them in the supreme time of their life—far above the time of death—but to me comes back as a hazy dream, without any knowledge in it, what I did, or felt, or thought, with my wife's arms flagging, flagging, around my neck, as I raised her up, and softly put them there. She sighed a long sigh on my breast, for her last farewell to life, and then she grew so cold, and cold, that I asked the time of year.

It was now Whit-Tuesday, and the lilacs all in blossom; and why I thought of the time of year, with the young death in my arms, God, or His angels, may decide, having so strangely given us. Enough that so I did, and looked; and our white lilacs were beautiful. Then I laid my wife in my mother's arms, and begging that no one would make a noise, went forth for my revenge.

<sup>1</sup> From *Lorna Doone*. Published by Harper & Brothers.

Of course, I knew who had done it. There was but one man in the world, or at any rate in our part of it, who could have done such a thing—such a thing. I used no harsher word about it, while I leaped upon our best horse, with bridle but no saddle, and set the head of Kickums toward the course now pointed out to me. Who showed me the course, I cannot tell. I only know that I took it. And the men fell back before me.

Weapon of no sort had I. Unarmed, and wondering at my strange attire (with a bridal vest, wrought by our Annie, and red with the blood of the bride), I went forth just to find out this: whether in this world there be or be not a God of justice.

With my vicious horse at a furious speed I came upon Black Barrow Down, directed by some shout of men, which seemed to me but a whisper. And there, about a furlong before me, rode a man on a great black horse, and I knew that the man was Carver Doone.

“Your life or mine,” I said to myself, “as the will of God may be. But we two live not upon this earth, one more hour, together.”

I knew the strength of this great man; and I knew that he was armed with a gun—if he had time to load again, after shooting my Lorna—or at any rate with pistols, and a horseman’s sword as well. Nevertheless, I had no more doubt of killing the man before me than a cook has of spitting a headless fowl.

Sometimes seeing no ground beneath me, and sometimes heeding every leaf, and the crossing of the grass-blades, I followed over the long moor, reckless whether seen or not. But only once the other man turned round and looked back again, and then I was beside a rock, with a reedy swamp behind me.

Although he was so far before me, and riding as hard as

ride he might, I saw that he had something on the horse in front of him; something which needed care, and stopped him from looking backward. In the whirling of my wits, I fancied first that this was Lorna; until the scene I had been through fell across hot brain and heart, like the drop at the close of a tragedy. Rushing there through crag and quag, at utmost speed of a maddened horse, I saw, as of another's fate, calmly (as on canvas laid), the brutal deed, the piteous anguish, and the cold despair.

The man turned up the gully leading from the moor to Cloven Rocks, through which John Fry had tracked Uncle Ben, as of old related. But as Carver entered it, he turned round, and beheld me not a hundred yards behind; and I saw that he was bearing his child, little Ensie, before him. Ensie also descried me, and stretched his hands and cried to me; for the face of his father frightened him.

Carver Doone, with a vile oath, thrust spurs into his flagging horse, and laid one hand on a pistol-stock, whence I knew that his slung carbine had received no bullet since the one that had pierced Lorna. And a cry of triumph rose from the black depths of my heart. What cared I for pistols? I had no spurs, neither was my horse one to need the rowel; I rather held him in than urged him, for he was fresh as ever; and I knew that the black steed in front, if he breasted the steep ascent, where the track divided, must be in our reach at once.

His rider knew this; and, having no room in the rocky channel to turn and fire, drew rein at the crossways sharply, and plunged into the black ravine leading to the Wizard's Slough. "Is it so?" I said to myself, with brain and head cold as iron; "though the foul fiend come from the slough, to save thee, thou shalt carve it, Carver."

I followed my enemy carefully, steadily, even leisurely; for I had him, as in a pitfall, whence no escape might be.

He thought that I feared to approach him, for he knew not where he was; and his low, disdainful laugh came back. "Laugh he who wins," thought I.

A gnarled and half-starved oak, as stubborn as my own resolve, and smitten by some storm of old, hung from the crag above me. Rising from my horse's back, although I had no stirrups, I caught a limb, and tore it (like a mere wheat-awn) from the socket. Men show the rent even now, with wonder; none with more wonder than myself.

Carver Doone turned the corner suddenly on the black and bottomless bog; with a start of fear he reined back his horse, and I thought he would have turned upon me. But instead of that he again rode on, hoping to find a way round the side.

Now there is a way between cliff and slough for those who know the ground thoroughly, or have time enough to search it; but for him there was no road, and he lost some time in seeking it. Upon this he made up his mind; and, wheeling, fired, and then rode at me.

His bullet struck me somewhere, but I took no heed of that. Fearing only his escape, I laid my horse across the way, and with the limb of the oak struck full on the forehead his charging steed. Ere the slash of the sword came nigh me, man and horse rolled over, and well-nigh bore my own horse down, with the power of their onset.

Carver Doone was somewhat stunned, and could not arise for a moment. Meanwhile I leaped on the ground and awaited, smoothing my hair back, and baring my arms, as though in the ring for wrestling. Then the little boy ran to me, clasped my leg, and looked up at me; and the terror in his eyes made me almost fear myself.

"Ensie, dear," I said, quite gently, grieving that he should see his wicked father killed, "run up yonder round the corner, and try to find a pretty bunch of bluebells for

the lady." The child obeyed me, hanging back, and looking back, and then laughing, while I prepared for business. There and then I might have killed mine enemy with a single blow, while he lay unconscious; but it would have been foul play.

With a sullen and black scowl the Carver gathered his mighty limbs, and arose, and looked round for his weapons; but I had put them well away. Then he came to me and gazed, being wont to frighten thus young men.

"I would not harm you, lad," he said, with a lofty style of sneering. "I have punished you enough for most of your impertinence. For the rest I forgive you, because you have been good and gracious to my little son. Go, and be contented."

For answer, I smote him on the cheek, lightly, and not to hurt him, but to make his blood leap up. I would not sully my tongue by speaking to a man like this.

There was a level space of sward between us and the slough. With the courtesy derived from London, and the processions I had seen, to this place I led him. And that he might breathe himself, and have every fibre cool, and every muscle ready, my hold upon his coat I loosed, and left him to begin with me, whenever he thought proper.

I think he felt that his time was come. I think he knew from my knitted muscles, and the firm arch of my breast, and the way in which I stood, but most of all from my stern blue eyes, that he had found his master. At any rate a paleness came, an ashy paleness on his cheeks, and the vast calves of his legs bowed in, as if he were out of training.

Seeing this, villain as he was, I offered him first chance. I stretched forth my left hand, as I do to a weaker antagonist, and I let him have the hug of me. But in this I was too generous, having forgotten my pistol-wound, and

the cracking of one of my short lower ribs. Carver Doone caught me round the waist with such a grip as never yet had been laid upon me.

I heard my rib go; I grasped his arm, and tore the muscle out of it (as the string comes out of an orange); then I took him by the throat, which is not allowed in wrestling; but he had snatched at mine; and now was no time of dalliance. In vain he tugged, and strained, and writhed, dashed his bleeding fist into my face, and flung himself on me with gnashing jaws. Beneath the iron of my strength—for God that day was with me—I had him helpless in two minutes, and his fiery eyes lolled out.

"I will not harm thee any more," I cried, so far as I could for panting, the work being very furious: "Carver Doone, thou art beaten; own it, and thank God for it; and go thy way, and repent thyself."

It was all too late. Even if he had yielded in his ravening frenzy—for his beard was like a mad dog's jowl—even if he would have owned that, for the first time in his life he had found his master, it was all too late.

The black bog had him by the feet; the sucking of the ground drew on him, like the thirsty lips of death. In our fury we had heeded neither wet nor dry; nor thought of earth beneath us. I myself might scarcely leap, with the last spring of o'er-labored legs, from the engulfing grave of slime. He fell back, with his swarthy breast (from which my grip had rent all clothing), like a hummock of bog-oak, standing out the quagmire; and then he tossed his arms to heaven, and they were black to the elbow, and the glare of his eyes was ghastly. I could only gaze and pant; for my strength was no more than an infant's, from the fury and the horror. Scarcely could I turn away, while, joint by joint, he sank from sight.

THE ROMAN CHARIOT-RACE<sup>1</sup>*Lew Wallace (1827-1905)*

The competitors were now under view from nearly every part of the Circus, yet the race was not begun; they had first to make the chalked line successfully.

The line was stretched for the purpose of equalizing the start. If it were dashed upon, discomfiture of man and horses might be apprehended; on the other hand, to approach it timidly was to incur the hazard of being thrown behind in the beginning of the race; and that was certain forfeit of the great advantage always striven for—the position next the division wall on the inner line of the course.

This trial, its perils and consequences, the spectators knew thoroughly; and if the opinion of old Nestor, uttered what time he handed the reins to his son, were true—

“It is not strength, but art, obtained the prize,  
And to be swift is less than to be wise”—

all on the benches might well look for warning of the winner to be now given, justifying the interest with which they breathlessly watched for the result.

The arena swam in a dazzle of light; yet each driver looked first thing for the rope, then for the coveted inner line. So, all six aiming at the same point and speeding furiously, a collision seemed inevitable; nor that merely. What if the editor, at the last moment, dissatisfied with the start, should withhold the signal to drop the rope? Or if he should not give it in time?

<sup>1</sup> From *Ben-Hur*. Copyright, 1880, 1908, by Harper & Brothers. Copyright, 1908, by Henry L. Wallace.

The crossing was about two hundred and fifty feet in width. Quick the eye, steady the hand, unerring the judgment required. If now one look away! or his mind wander! or a rein slip! And what attraction in the *ensemble* of the thousands over the spreading balcony! Calculating upon the natural impulse to give one glance—just one—in sooth of curiosity or vanity, malice might be there with an artifice; while friendship and love, did they serve the same result, might be as deadly as malice.

The divine last touch in perfecting the beautiful is animation. Can we accept the saying, then these latter days, so tame in pastime and dull in sports, have scarcely anything to compare with the spectacle offered by the six contestants. Let the reader try to fancy it; let him first look down upon the arena, and see it glistening in its frame of dull-gray granite walls; let him then, in this perfect field, see the chariots, light of wheel, very graceful, and ornate as paint and burnishing can make them—Messala's rich with ivory and gold; let him see the drivers, erect and statuesque, undisturbed by the motion of the cars, their limbs naked, and fresh and ruddy with the healthful polish of the baths—in their right hands goads, suggestive of torture dreadful to the thought—in their left hands, held in careful separation, and high, that they may not interfere with view of the steeds, the reins passing taut from the fore ends of the carriage-poles; let him see the fours chosen for beauty as well as speed; let him see them, in magnificent action, their masters not more conscious of the situation and all that is asked and hoped from them—their heads tossing, nostrils in play, now distent, now contracted—limbs too dainty for the sand which they touch but to spurn—limbs slender, yet with impact crushing as hammers—every muscle of the rounded bodies instinct with glorious life, swelling, diminishing, justifying the world



in taking from them its ultimate measure of force; finally along with chariots, drivers, horses, let the reader see the accompanying shadows fly; and, with such distinctness as the picture comes, he may share the satisfaction and deeper pleasure of those to whom it was a thrilling fact, not a feeble fancy. Every age has its plenty of sorrows; Heaven help where there are no pleasures!

The competitors having started each on the shortest line for the position next the wall, yielding would be like giving up the race; and who dared yield? It is not in common nature to change a purpose in mid-career; and the cries of encouragement from the balcony were indistinguishable and indescribable: a roar which had the same effect upon all the drivers.

The fours neared the rope together. Then the trumpeter by the editor's side blew a signal vigorously. Twenty feet away it was not heard. Seeing the action, however, the judges dropped the rope, and not an instant too soon, for the hoof of one of Messala's horses struck it as it fell. Nothing daunted, the Roman shook out his long lash, loosed the reins, leaned forward, and, with a triumphant shout, took the wall.

"Jove with us! Jove with us!" yelled all the Roman faction, in a frenzy of delight.

As Messala turned in, the bronze lion's head at the end of his axle caught the fore-leg of the Athenian's right-hand trace-mate, flinging the brute over against its yoke-fellow. Both staggered, struggled, and lost their headway. The ushers had their will at least in part. The thousands held their breath with horror; only up where the consul sat was there shouting.

"Jove with us!" screamed Drusus, frantically.

"He wins! Jove with us!" answered his associates, seeing Messala speed on.

Tablet in hand, Sanballat turned to them; a crash from the course below stopped his speech, and he could not but look that way.

Messala having passed, the Corinthian was the only contestant on the Athenian's right, and to that side the latter tried to turn his broken four; and then, as ill-fortune would have it, the wheel of the Byzantine, who was next on the left, struck the tail-piece of his chariot, knocking his feet from under him. There was a crash, a scream of rage and fear, and the unfortunate Cleanthes fell under the hoofs of his own steeds: a terrible sight, against which Esther covered her eyes.

On swept the Corinthian, on the Byzantine, on the Sidonian.

Sanballat looked for Ben-Hur, and turned again to Drusus and his coterie.

"A hundred sestertii on the Jew!" he cried.

"Taken!" answered Drusus.

"Another hundred on the Jew!" shouted Sanballat.

Nobody appeared to hear him. He called again; the situation below was too absorbing, and they were too busy shouting, "Messala! Messala! Jove with us!"

When the Jewess ventured to look again, a party of workmen were removing the horses and broken car; another party were taking off the man himself; and every bench upon which there was a Greek was vocal with execrations and prayers for vengeance. Suddenly she dropped her hands; Ben-Hur, unhurt, was to the front, coursing freely forward along with the Roman! Behind them, in a group, followed the Sidonian, the Corinthian, and the Byzantine.

The race was on; the souls of the racers were in it; over them bent the myriads.

When the dash for position began, Ben-Hur, as we have

seen, was on the extreme left of the six. For a moment, like the others, he was half blinded by the light in the arena; yet he managed to catch sight of his antagonists and divine their purpose. At Messala, who was more than an antagonist to him, he gave one searching look. The air of passionless hauteur characteristic of the fine patrician face was there as of old, and so was the Italian beauty, which the helmet rather increased; but more—it may have been a jealous fancy, or the effect of the brassy shadow in which the features were at the moment cast, still the Israelite thought he saw the soul of the man as through a glass, darkly: cruel, cunning, desperate; not so excited as determined—a soul in a tension of watchfulness and fierce resolve.

In a time not longer than was required to turn to his four again, Ben-Hur felt his own resolution harden to a like temper. At whatever cost, at all hazards, he would humble this enemy! Prize, friends, wagers, honor—everything that can be thought of as a possible interest in the race was lost in the one deliberate purpose. Regard for life even should not hold him back. Yet there was no passion, on his part; no blinding rush of heated blood from heart to brain, and back again; no impulse to fling himself upon Fortune: he did not believe in Fortune; far otherwise. He had his plan, and, confiding in himself, he settled to the task never more observant, never more capable. The air about him seemed aglow with a renewed and perfect transparency.

When not half-way across the arena he saw that Messala's rush would, if there was no collision, and the rope fell, give him the wall; that the rope would fall, he ceased as soon to doubt; and, further, it came to him, a sudden flash-like insight, that Messala knew it was to be let drop at the last moment (prearrangement with the editor could safely reach

that point in the contest); and it suggested, what more Roman-like than for the official to lend himself to a countryman, who, besides being so popular, had also so much at stake? There could be no other accounting for the confidence with which Messala pushed his four forward the instant his competitors were prudentially checking their fours in front of the obstruction—no other except madness.

It is one thing to see a necessity and another to act upon it. Ben-Hur yielded the wall for the time.

The rope fell, and all the fours but his sprang into the course under urgency of voice and lash. He drew head to the right, and, with all the speed of his Arabs, darted across the trails of his opponents, the angle of movement being such as to lose the least time and gain the greatest possible advance. So, while the spectators were shivering at the Athenian's mishap, and the Sidonian, Byzantine, and Corinthian were striving, with such skill as they possessed, to avoid involvement in the ruin, Ben-Hur swept around and took the course neck and neck with Messala, though on the outside. The marvellous skill shown in making the change thus from the extreme left across to the right without appreciable loss did not fail the sharp eyes upon the benches: the Circus seemed to rock and rock again with prolonged applause. Then Esther clasped her hands in glad surprise; then Sanballat, smiling, offered his hundred sestertii a second time without a taker; and then the Romans began to doubt, thinking Messala might have found an equal, if not a master, and that in an Israelite!

And now, racing together side by side, a narrow interval between them, the two neared the second goal.

The pedestal of the three pillars there, viewed from the west, was a stone wall in the form of a half-circle, around which the course and opposite balcony were bent in exact parallelism. Making this turn was considered in all re-

spects the most telling test of a charioteer; it was, in fact, the very feat in which Orestes failed. As an involuntary admission of interest on the part of the spectators, a hush fell over all the Circus, so that for the first time in the race the rattle and clang of the cars plunging after the tugging steeds were distinctly heard. Then, it would seem, Messala observed Ben-Hur, and recognized him; and at once the audacity of the man flamed out in an astonishing manner.

"Down Eros, up Mars!" he shouted, whirling his lash with practised hand. "Down Eros, up Mars!" he repeated, and caught the well-doing Arabs of Ben-Hur a cut the like of which they had never known.

The blow was seen in every quarter, and the amazement was universal. The silence deepened; up on the benches behind the consul the boldest held his breath, waiting for the outcome. Only a moment thus: then, involuntarily, down from the balcony, as thunder falls, burst the indignant cry of the people.

The four sprang forward affrighted. No hand had ever been laid upon them except in love; they had been nurtured ever so tenderly; and as they grew, their confidence in man became a lesson to men beautiful to see. What should such dainty natures do under such indignity but leap as from death?

Forward they sprang as with one impulse, and forward leaped the car. Past question, every experience is serviceable to us. Where got Ben-Hur the large hand and mighty grip which helped him now so well? Where but from the oar with which so long he fought the sea? And what was this spring of the floor under his feet to the dizzy, eccentric lurch with which in the old time the trembling ship yielded to the beat of staggering billows, drunk with their power? So he kept his place, and gave the four free rein, and called

to them in soothing voice, trying merely to guide them round the dangerous turn; and before the fever of the people began to abate, he had back the mastery. Nor that only: on approaching the first goal he was again side by side with Messala, bearing with him the sympathy and admiration of every one not a Roman. So clearly was the feeling shown, so vigorous its manifestation, that Messala, with all his boldness, felt it unsafe to trifle further.

As the cars whirled round the goal, Esther caught sight of Ben-Hur's face—a little pale, a little higher raised, otherwise calm, even placid.

Immediately a man climbed on the entablature at the west end of the division wall, and took down one of the conical wooden balls. A dolphin on the east entablature was taken down at the same time.

In like manner, the second ball and second dolphin disappeared.

And then the third ball and third dolphin.

Three rounds concluded: still Messala held the inside position; still Ben-Hur moved with him side by side; still the other competitors followed as before. The contest began to have the appearance of one of the double races which became so popular in Rome during the later Cæsarean period—Messala and Ben-Hur in the first, the Corinthian, Sidonian, and Byzantine in the second. Meantime the ushers succeeded in returning the multitude to their seats, though the clamor continued to run the rounds, keeping, as it were, even pace with the rivals in the course below.

In the fifth round the Sidonian succeeded in getting a place outside Ben-Hur, but lost it directly.

The sixth round was entered upon without change of relative position.

Gradually the speed had been quickened—gradually the

blood of the competitors warmed with the work. Men and beasts seemed to know alike that the final crisis was near, bringing the time for the winner to assert himself.

The interest which from the beginning had centred chiefly in the struggle between the Roman and the Jew, with an intense and general sympathy for the latter, was fast changing to anxiety on his account. On all the benches the spectators bent forward motionless, except as their faces turned following the contestants. Ilderim quitted combing his beard, and Esther forgot her fears.

"A hundred sestertii on the Jew!" cried Sanballat to the Romans under the consul's awning.

There was no reply.

"A talent—or five talents, or ten; choose ye!"

"I will take thy sestertii," answered a Roman youth, preparing to write.

"Do not so," interposed a friend.

"Why?"

"Messala hath reached his utmost speed. See him lean over his chariot-rim, the reins loose as flying ribbons. Look then at the Jew."

The first one looked.

"By Hercules!" he replied, his countenance falling.

"The dog throws all his weight on the bits. I see, I see! If the gods help not our friend, he will be run away with by the Israelite. No, not yet. Look! Jove with us! Jove with us!"

The cry, swelled by every Latin tongue, shook the *velaria* over the consul's head.

If it were true that Messala had attained his utmost speed, the effort was with effect; slowly but certainly he was beginning to forge ahead. His horses were running with their heads low down; from the balcony their bodies appeared actually to skim the earth; their nostrils showed

blood-red in expansion; their eyes seemed straining in their sockets. Certainly the good steeds were doing their best! How long could they keep the pace? It was but the commencement of the sixth round. On they dashed. As they neared the second goal, Ben-Hur turned in behind the Roman's car.

The joy of the Messala faction reached its bound: they screamed and howled, and tossed their colors; and Sanballat filled his tablets with wagers of their tendering.

Malluch, in the lower gallery over the Gate of Triumph, found it hard to keep his cheer. He had cherished the vague hint dropped to him by Ben-Hur of something to happen in the turning of the western pillars. It was the fifth round, yet the something had not come; and he had said to himself, the sixth will bring it; but, lo! Ben-Hur was hardly holding a place at the tail of his enemy's car.

Over in the east end, Simonides' party held their peace. The merchant's head was bent low. Ilderim tugged at his beard, and dropped his brows till there was nothing of his eyes but an occasional sparkle of light. Esther scarcely breathed. Iras alone appeared glad.

Along the homestretch—sixth round—Messala leading, next him Ben-Hur, and so close it was the old story:

"First flew Eumelus on Pheretian steeds;  
With those of Tros bold Diomed succeeds;  
Close on Eumelus' back they puff the wind,  
And seem just mounting on his car behind;  
Full on his neck he feels the sultry breeze,  
And, hovering o'er, their stretching shadow sees."

Thus to the first goal, and round it. Messala, fearful of losing his place, hugged the stony wall with perilous clasp; a foot to the left, and he had been dashed to pieces; yet, when the turn was finished, no man, looking at the wheel-



tracks of the two cars, could have said, here went Messala, there the Jew. They left but one trace behind them.

As they whirled by, Esther saw Ben-Hur's face again, and it was whiter than before.

Simonides, shrewder than Esther, said to Ilderim, the moment the rivals turned into the course, "I am no judge, good sheik, if Ben-Hur be not about to execute some design. His face hath that look."

To which Ilderim answered, "Saw you how clean they were and fresh? By the splendor of God, friend, they have not been running! But now watch!"

One ball and one dolphin remained on the entablatures; and all the people drew a long breath, for the beginning of the end was a hand.

First, the Sidonian gave the scourge to his four, and, smarting with fear and pain, they dashed desperately forward, promising for a brief time to go to the front. The effort ended in promise. Next, the Byzantine and Corinthian each made the trial with like result, after which they were practically out of the race. Thereupon, with a readiness perfectly explicable, all the factions except the Romans joined hope in Ben-Hur, and openly indulged their feeling.

"Ben-Hur! Ben-Hur!" they shouted, and the blent voices of the many rolled overwhelmingly against the consular stand.

From the benches above him as he passed, the favor descended in fierce injunctions.

"Speed thee, Jew!"

"Take the wall now!"

"On! loose the Arabs! Give them rein and scourge!"

"Let him not have the turn on thee again. Now or never!"

Over the balustrade they stooped low, stretching their hands imploringly to him.

Either he did not hear, or could not do better, for half-way round the course and he was still following; at the second goal even still no change!

And now, to make the turn, Messala began to draw in his left-hand steeds, an act which necessarily slackened their speed. His spirit was high; more than one altar was richer of his vows; the Roman genius was still president. On the three pillars only six hundred feet away were fame, increase of fortune, promotions, and a triumph ineffably sweetened by hate, all in store for him! That moment Malluch, in the gallery, saw Ben-Hur lean forward over his Arabs and give them the reins. Out flew the many-folded lash in his hand; over the backs of the startled steeds it writhed and hissed, and hissed and writhed again and again; and though it fell not, there were both sting and menace in its quick report; and as the man passed thus from quiet to resistless action, his face suffused, his eyes gleaming, along the reins he seemed to flash his will; and instantly not one, but the four as one, answered with a leap that landed them alongside the Roman's car. Messala, on the perilous edge of the goal, heard, but dared not look to see what the awakening portended. From the people he received no sign. Above the noises of the race there was but one voice, and that was Ben-Hur's. In the old Aramaic, as the sheik himself, he called to the Arabs:

"On, Atair! On, Rigel! What, Antares! dost thou linger now? Good horse—oho, Aldebaran! I hear them singing in the tents. I hear the children singing and the women—singing of the stars, of Atair, Antares, Rigel, Aldebaran, victory!—and the song will never end. Well done! Home to-morrow, under the black tent—home! On, Antares! The tribe is waiting for us, and the master

is waiting! 'Tis done! 'tis done! Ha, ha! We have overthrown the proud. The hand that smote us is in the dust. Ours the glory! Ha, ha!—steady! The work is done—soho! Rest!”

There had never been anything of the kind more simple; seldom anything so instantaneous.

At the moment chosen for the dash Messala was moving in a circle round the goal. To pass him Ben-Hur had to cross the track, and good strategy required the movement to be in a forward direction—that is, on a like circle limited to the least possible increase. The thousands on the benches understood it all; they saw the signal given—the magnificent response; the four close outside Messala's outer wheel, Ben-Hur's inner wheel behind the other's car—all this they saw. Then they heard a crash loud enough to send a thrill through the Circus, and, quicker than thought, out over the course a spray of shining white and yellow flinders flew. Down on its right side toppled the bed of the Roman's chariot. There was a rebound as of the axle hitting the hard earth; another and another; then the car went to pieces; and Messala, entangled in the reins, pitched forward headlong.

To increase the horror of the sight by making death certain, the Sidonian, who had the wall next behind, could not stop or turn out. Into the wreck full speed he drove; then over the Roman, and into the latter's four, all mad with fear. Presently, out of the turmoil, the fighting of horses, the resound of blows, the murky cloud of dust and sand, he crawled, in time to see the Corinthian and Byzantine go on down the course after Ben-Hur, who had not been an instant delayed.

The people arose, and leaped upon the benches, and shouted and screamed. Those who looked that way caught glimpses of Messala, now under the trampling of the fours,

now under the abandoned cars. He was still; they thought him dead; but far the greater number followed Ben-Hur in his career. They had not seen the cunning touch of the reins by which, turning a little to the left, he caught Mes-sala's wheel with the iron-shod point of his axle, and crushed it; but they had seen the transformation of the man, and themselves felt the heat and glow of his spirit, the heroic resolution, the maddening energy of action with which, by look, word, and gesture, he so suddenly inspired his Arabs. And such running! It was rather the long leaping of lions in harness; but for the lumbering chariot, it seemed the four were flying. When the Byzantine and Corinthian were half-way down the course, Ben-Hur turned the first goal.

*And the race was won!*

### THE DUEL IN THE SNOW<sup>1</sup>

*Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)*

[Mackellar discovers the insolent provocation given by the Master of Ballantrae to his brother Henry, and is witness to the subsequent duel between them.]

On the evening of the interview referred to, the Master went abroad; he was abroad a great deal of the next day, also, that fatal 27th; but where he went or what he did we never concerned ourselves to ask until next day. If we had done so, and by any chance found out, it might have changed all. But as all we did was done in ignorance, and should be so judged, I shall so narrate these passages as they appeared to us in the moment of their birth, and reserve all that I since discovered for the time

<sup>1</sup> From *The Master of Ballantrae*,

of its discovery. For I have now come to one of the dark parts of my narrative, and must engage the reader's indulgence for my patron.

All the 27th, that rigorous weather endured: a stifling cold; the folk passing about like smoking chimneys; the wide hearth in the hall piled high with fuel; some of the spring birds that had already blundered north into our neighborhood besieging the windows of the house or trotting on the frozen turf like things distracted. About noon there came a blink of sunshine, showing a very pretty, wintry, frosty landscape of white hills and woods, with Crail's lugger waiting for wind under the Craig Head, and the smoke mounting straight into the air from every farm and cottage. With the coming of night the haze closed in overhead; it fell dark and still and starless and exceeding cold; a night the most unseasonable, fit for strange events.

Mrs. Henry withdrew, as was now her custom, very early. We had set ourselves of late to pass the evening with a game of cards, another mark that our visitor was wearying mightily of the life at Durrisdeer; and we had not been long at this when my old lord slipped from his place beside the fire and was off without a word to seek the warmth of bed. The three thus left together had neither love nor courtesy to share; not one of us would have sat up one instant to oblige another; yet from the influence of custom and as the cards had just been dealt, we continued the form of playing out the round. I should say we were late sitters; and though my lord had departed earlier than was his custom, twelve was already gone some time upon the clock, and the servants long ago in bed. Another thing I should say, that although I never saw the Master any way affected with liquor, he had been drinking freely and was perhaps (although he showed it not) a trifle heated.

Anyway, he now practised one of his transitions; and so

soon as the door closed behind my lord, and without the smallest change of voice, shifted from ordinary civil talk into a stream of insult.

"My dear Henry, it is yours to play," he had been saying, and now continued: "It is a very strange thing how, even in so small a matter as a game of cards, you display your rusticity. You play, Jacob, like a bonnet laird, or a sailor in a tavern. The same dulness, the same petty greed, *cette lenteur d'hébété qui me fait rager*; it is strange I should have such a brother. Even Squaretoes has a certain vivacity when his stake is imperilled; but the dreariness of a game with you I positively lack language to depict."

Mr. Henry continued to look at his cards, as though very maturely considering some play; but his mind was elsewhere.

"Dear God, will this never be done?" cries the Master. "*Quel lourdeau!* But why do I trouble you with French expressions, which are lost on such an ignoramus? A *lourdeau*, my dear brother, is, as we might say, a bumpkin, a clown, a clodpole; a fellow without grace, lightness, quickness, any gift of pleasing, any natural brilliancy; such a one as you shall see, when you desire, by looking in the mirror. I tell you these things for your good, I assure you; and besides, Squaretoes" (looking at me and stifling a yawn), "it is one of my diversions in this very dreary spot to toast you and your master at the fire like chestnuts. I have great pleasure in your case, for I observe the nickname (rustic as it is) has always the power to make you writhe. But sometimes I have more trouble with this dear fellow here, who seems to have gone to sleep upon his cards. Do you not see the applicability of the epithet I have just explained, dear Henry? Let me show you. For instance, with all those solid qualities which I delight to

recognize in you, I never knew a woman who did not prefer me—nor, I think,” he continued, with the most silken deliberation, “I think—who did not continue to prefer me.”

Mr. Henry laid down his cards. He rose to his feet very softly, and seemed all the while like a person in deep thought. “You coward!” he said, gently, as if to himself. And then, with neither hurry nor any particular violence, he struck the Master in the mouth.

The Master sprang to his feet like one transfigured. I had never seen the man so beautiful. “A blow!” he cried. “I would not take a blow from God Almighty!”

“Lower your voice,” said Mr. Henry. “Do you wish my father to interfere for you again?”

“Gentlemen, gentlemen,” I cried, and sought to come between them.

The Master caught me by the shoulder, held me at arm’s-length, and, still addressing his brother, “Do you know what this means?” said he.

“It was the most deliberate act of my life,” says Mr. Henry.

“I must have blood, I must have blood for this,” says the Master.

“Please God it shall be yours,” said Mr. Henry; and he went to the wall and took down a pair of swords that hung there with others, naked. These he presented to the Master by the points. “Mackellar shall see us play fair,” said Mr. Henry. “I think it very needful.”

“You need insult me no more,” said the Master, taking one of the swords at random. “I have hated you all my life.”

“My father is but newly gone to bed,” said Mr. Henry. “We must go somewhere forth of the house.”

“There is an excellent place in the long shrubbery,” said the Master.

"Gentlemen," said I, "shame upon you both! Sons of the same mother, would you turn against the life she gave you?"

"Even so, Mackellar," said Mr. Henry, with the same perfect quietude of manner he had shown throughout.

"It is what I will prevent," said I.

And now here is a blot upon my life. At these words of mine the Master turned his blade against my bosom; I saw the light run along the steel; and I threw up my arms and fell to my knees before him on the floor. "No, no!" I cried, like a baby.

"We shall have no more trouble with him," said the Master. "It is a good thing to have a coward in the house."

"We must have light," said Mr. Henry, as though there had been no interruption.

"This trembler can bring a pair of candles," said the Master.

To my shame be it said, I was so blinded with the flashing of that bare sword that I volunteered to bring a lantern.

"We do not need a l-l-lantern," said the Master, mocking me. "There is no breath of air. Come, get to your feet, take a pair of lights, and go before. I am close behind with this—" making the blade glitter as he spoke.

I took up the candlesticks and went before them, steps that I would give my hand to recall; but a coward is a slave at the best; and even as I went my teeth smote each other in my mouth. It was as he had said, there was no breath stirring: a windless stricture of frost had bound the air; and as we went forth in the shine of the candles the blackness was like a roof over our heads. Never a word was said, there was never a sound but the creaking of our steps along the frozen path. The cold of the night fell about me like a bucket of water; I shook as I went with more than terror; but my companions, bareheaded like myself, and fresh from the warm hall, appeared not even conscious of the change.



"Here is the place," said the Master. "Set down the candles."

I did as he bade me, and presently the flames went up as steady as in a chamber in the midst of the frosted trees, and I beheld these two brothers take their places.

"The light is something in my eyes," said the Master.

"I will give you every advantage," replied Mr. Henry, shifting his ground, "for I think you are about to die." He spoke rather sadly than otherwise, yet there was a ring in his voice.

"Henry Durie," said the Master, "two words before I begin. You are a fencer, you can hold a foil; you little know what a change it makes to hold a sword! And by that I know you are to fall. But see how strong is my situation! If you fall, I shift out of this country to where my money is before me. If I fall, where are you? My father, your wife, who is in love with me—as you very well know—your child even, who prefers me to yourself: how will these avenge me! Had you thought of that, dear Henry?" He looked at his brother with a smile; then made a fencing-room salute.

Never a word said Mr. Henry, but saluted too, and the swords rang together.

I am no judge of the play; my head besides was gone with cold and fear and horror; but it seems that Mr. Henry took and kept the upper hand from the engagement, crowding in upon his foe with a contained and glowing fury. Nearer and nearer he crept upon the man till, of a sudden, the Master leaped back with a little sobbing oath; and I believe the movement brought the light once more against his eyes. To it they went again, on the fresh ground; but now methought closer, Mr. Henry pressing more outrageously, the Master beyond doubt with shaken confidence.

For it is beyond doubt he now recognized himself for lost, and had some taste of the cold agony of fear; or he had never attempted the foul stroke. I cannot say I followed it, my untrained eye was never quick enough to seize details, but it appears he caught his brother's blade with his left hand, a practice not permitted. Certainly Mr. Henry only saved himself by leaping on one side; as certainly the Master, lunging in the air, stumbled on his knee, and before he could move, the sword was through his body.

I cried out with a stifled scream, and ran in; but the body was already fallen to the ground, where it writhed a moment like a trodden worm, and then lay motionless.

"Look at his left hand," said Mr. Henry.

"It is all bloody," said I.

"On the inside?" said he.

"It is cut on the inside," said I.

"I thought so," said he, and turned his back.

I opened the man's clothes; the heart was quite still, it gave not a flutter.

"God forgive us, Mr. Henry!" said I. "He is dead."

"Dead?" he repeated, a little stupidly; and then with a rising tone, "Dead? dead?" says he, and suddenly cast his bloody sword upon the ground.

"What must we do?" said I. "Be yourself, sir. It is too late now; you must be yourself."

He turned and stared at me. "Oh, Mackellar!" says he, and put his face in his hands.

I plucked him by the coat. "For God's sake, for all our sakes, be more courageous!" said I. "What must we do?"

He showed me his face with the same stupid stare. "Do?" says he. And with that his eye fell on the body, and "Oh!" he cries out, with his hand to his brow, as if he had never remembered; and, turning from me, made off toward the house of Durrissdeer at a strange, stumbling run.

I stood a moment mused; then it seemed to me my duty lay most plain on the side of the living; and I ran after him, leaving the candles on the frosty ground and the body lying in their light under the trees.

### THE SIEGE OF THE ROUND-HOUSE<sup>1</sup>

*Robert Louis Stevenson* (1850–1894)

[David Balfour, the hero and narrator of the story, has been kidnapped at the instigation of his uncle by Captain Elias Hoseason, who has instructions to sell him to the planters in America. Hoseason's brig *Covenant*, sailing out of Queensferry, has been driven by storms far out of its course to the northward round the Orkneys, and is steering south down the west coast of Scotland, when it runs down a rowboat of which all the occupants are drowned, save only Alan Breck Stewart. Alan is a Jacobite and an outlaw, who is carrying back money to France collected from Highland clansmen for "The king across the water." He makes a bargain with Captain Hoseason to set him ashore. But the Captain, having seen his belt of money, plots with his officers to murder the stranger. David Balfour, who is acting as cabin-boy, is sent into the round-house, where Alan is seated, to smuggle out some firearms.]

I came into the round-house and saw the Jacobite eating his supper under the lamp; and at that my mind was made up all in a moment. I walked right up to the table and put my hand on his shoulder.

"Do ye want to be killed?" said I.

He sprang to his feet, and looked a question at me so clear as if he had spoken.

"Oh!" cried I, "they're all murderers here; it's a ship full of them! They've murdered a boy already. Now it's you."

<sup>1</sup> From *Kidnapped*.

"Ay, ay," said he; "but they haven't got me yet."

And then looking at me curiously, "Will ye stand with me?"

"That will I!" said I. "I am no thief, nor yet murderer. I'll stand by you."

"Why, then," said he, "what's your name?"

"David Balfour," said I; and then thinking that a man with so fine a coat must like fine people, I added for the first time "of Shaws."

It never occurred to him to doubt me, for a Highlander is used to see great gentlefolk in great poverty; but as he had no estate of his own, my words nettled a very childish vanity he had.

"My name is Stewart," he said, drawing himself up. "Alan Breck, they call me. A king's name is good enough for me, though I bear it plain and have the name of no farm-midden to clap to the hind-end of it."

And having administered this rebuke, as though it were something of a chief importance, he turned to examine our defences.

The round-house was built very strong, to support the breachings of the seas. Of its five apertures, only the skylight and the two doors were large enough for the passage of a man. The doors, besides, could be drawn close; they were of stout oak, and ran in grooves, and were fitted with hooks to keep them either shut or open, as the need arose. The one that was already shut I secured in this fashion; but when I was proceeding to slide to the other, Alan stopped me.

"David," said he—"for I cannae bring to mind the name of your landed estate, and so will make so bold as call you David—that door, being open, is the best part of my defences."

"It would be yet better shut," says I.

"Not so, David," says he. "Ye see, I have but one face; but so long as that door is open and my face to it, the best part of my enemies will be in front of me, where I would aye wish to find them."

Then he gave me from the rack a cutlass (of which there were a few besides the firearms), choosing it with great care, shaking his head and saying he had never in all his life seen poorer weapons; and next he set me down to the table with a powder-horn, a bag of bullets, and all the pistols, which he bade me charge.

"And that will be better work, let me tell you," said he, "for a gentleman of decent birth than scraping plates and raxing drams to a wheen tarry sailors."

Thereupon he stood up in the midst, with his face to the door, and, drawing his great sword, made trial of the room he had to wield it in.

"I must stick to the point," he said, shaking his head; "and that's a pity, too. It doesn't set my genius, which is all for the upper guard. And now," said he, "do you keep on charging the pistols, and give heed to me."

I told him I would listen closely. My chest was tight, my mouth dry, the light dark to my eyes; the thought of the numbers that were soon to leap in upon us kept my heart in a flutter; and the sea, which I heard washing round the brig, and where I thought my dead body would be cast ere morning, ran in my mind strangely.

"First of all," said he, "how many are against us?"

I reckoned them up; and such was the hurry of my mind I had to cast the numbers twice. "Fifteen," said I.

Alan whistled. "Well," said he, "that can't be cured. And now follow me. It is my part to keep this door, where I look for the main battle. In that, ye have no hand. And mind and dinnae fire to this side unless they get me down; for I would rather have ten foes in front

of me than one friend like you cracking pistols at my back."

I told him indeed I was no great shot.

"And that's very bravely said," he cried, in a great admiration of my candor. "There's many a pretty gentleman that wouldnae dare to say it."

"But then, sir," said I, "there is the door behind you, which they may perhaps break in."

"Ay," said he, "and that is a part of your work. No sooner the pistols charged, than ye must climb up into yon bed, where ye're handy at the window; and if they lift hand against the door, ye're to shoot. But that's not all. Let's make a bit of a soldier of ye, David. What else have ye to guard?"

"There's the skylight," said I. "But, indeed, Mr. Stewart, I would need to have eyes upon both sides to keep the two of them; for when my face is at the one my back is to the other."

"And that's very true," said Alan. "But have ye no ears to your head?"

"To be sure!" cried I. "I must hear the bursting of the glass!"

"Ye have some rudiments of sense," said Alan, grimly.

But now our time of truce was come to an end. Those on deck had waited for my coming till they grew impatient; and scarce had Alan spoken, when the captain showed face in the open door.

"Stand!" cried Alan, and pointed his sword at him.

The captain stood, indeed; but he neither winced nor drew back a foot.

"A naked sword?" says he. "This is a strange return for hospitality."

"Do you see me?" said Alan. "I am come of kings; I bear a king's name. My badge is the oak. Do ye see

my sword? It has slashed the heads off mair Whigamores than you have toes upon your feet. Call up your vermin to your back, sir, and fall on! The sooner the clash begins, the sooner ye'll taste this steel throughout your vitals."

The captain said nothing to Alan, but he looked over at me with an ugly look. "David," said he, "I'll mind this." And the sound of his voice went through me with a jar.

Next moment he was gone.

"And now," said Alan, "let your hand keep your head, for the grip is coming."

Alan drew a dirk, which he held in his left hand in case they should run in under his sword. I, on my part, clambered up into the berth with an armful of pistols and something of a heavy heart, and set open the window where I was to watch. It was a small part of the deck that I could overlook, but enough for our purpose. The sea had gone down, and the wind was steady and kept the sails quiet; so that there was a great stillness in the ship, in which I made sure I heard the sound of muttering voices. A little after, and there came a clash of steel upon the deck, by which I knew they were dealing out the cutlasses and one had been let fall; and after that silence again.

I do not know if I was what you call afraid; but my heart beat like a bird's, both quick and little; and there was a dimness came before my eyes which I continually rubbed away, and which continually returned. As for hope, I had none; but only a darkness of despair and a sort of anger against all the world that made me long to sell my life as dear as I was able. I tried to pray, I remember, but that same hurry of my mind, like a man running, would not suffer me to think upon the words;

and my chief wish was to have the thing begin and be done with it.

It came all of a sudden when it did, with a rush of feet and a roar, and then a shout from Alan, and a sound of blows and some one crying out as if hurt. I looked back over my shoulder, and saw Mr. Shuan in the doorway crossing blades with Alan.

"That's him that killed the boy!" I cried.

"Look to your window!" said Alan; and as I turned back to my place, I saw him pass his sword through the mate's body.

It was none too soon for me to look to my own part; for my head was scarce back at the window before five men, carrying a spare yard for a battering-ram, ran past me and took post to drive the door in. I had never fired with a pistol in my life, and not often with a gun; far less against a fellow-creature. But it was now or never; and just as they swung the yard, I cried out, "Take that!" and shot into their midst.

I must have hit one of them, for he sang out and gave back a step and the rest stopped as if a little disconcerted. Before they had time to recover I sent another ball over their heads; and at my third shot (which went as wide as the second) the whole party threw down the yard and ran for it.

Then I looked round again into the deck-house. The whole place was full of the smoke of my own firing, just as my ears seemed to be burst with the noise of the shots. But there was Alan, standing as before; only now his sword was running blood to the hilt, and himself so swelled with triumph and fallen into so fine an attitude that he looked to be invincible. Right before him on the floor was Mr. Shuan, on his hands and knees; the blood was pouring from his mouth, and he was sinking slowly lower,



with a terrible, white face; and just as I looked some of those from behind caught hold of him by the heels and dragged him bodily out of the round-house. I believe he died as they were doing it.

"There's one of your Whigs for ye!" cried Alan; and then turning to me, he asked if I had done much execution.

I told him I had winged one, and thought it was the captain.

"And I've settled two," says he. "No, there's not enough blood let; they'll be back again. To your watch, David. This was but a dram before meat."

I settled back to my place, recharging the three pistols I had fired, and keeping watch with both eye and ear.

Our enemies were disputing not far off upon the deck, and that so loudly that I could hear a word or two above the washing of the seas.

"It was Shuan bauchled it," I heard one say.

And another answered him with a "Wheesht, man! He's paid the piper."

After that the voices fell again into the same muttering as before. Only now, one person spoke most of the time, as though laying down a plan, and first one and then another answered him briefly, like men taking orders. By this, I made sure they were coming on again, and told Alan.

"It's what we have to pray for," said he. "Unless we can give them a good distaste of us, and done with it, there'll be nae sleep for either you or me. But this time, mind, they'll be in earnest."

By this my pistols were ready, and there was nothing to do but listen and wait. While the brush lasted, I had not the time to think if I was frightened; but now, when all was still again, my mind ran upon nothing else. The

thought of the sharp swords and the cold steel was strong in me; and presently, when I began to hear stealthy steps and a brushing of men's clothes against the round-house wall, and knew they were taking their places in the dark, I could have found it in my mind to cry out aloud.

All this was upon Alan's side; and I had begun to think my share of the fight was at an end, when I heard some one drop softly on the roof above me.

Then there came a single call on the sea-pipe, and that was the signal. A knot of them made one rush of it, cutlass in hand, against the door; and at the same moment the glass of the skylight was dashed in a thousand pieces, and a man leaped through and landed on the floor. Before he got to his feet I had clapped a pistol to his back, and might have shot him, too, only at the touch of him (and him alive) my whole flesh misgave me, and I could no more pull the trigger than I could have flown.

He had dropped his cutlass as he jumped, and, when he felt the pistol, whipped straight round and laid hold of me, roaring out an oath; and at that my courage came back again, or I grew so much afraid as came to the same thing; for I gave a shriek and shot him in the midst of the body. He gave the most horrible, ugly groan and fell to the floor. The foot of a second fellow, whose legs were dangling through the skylight, struck me at the same time upon the head; and at that I snatched another pistol and shot this one through the thigh, so that he slipped through and tumbled in a lump on his companion's body. There was no talk of missing, any more than there was time to aim; I clapped the muzzle to the very place and fired.

I might have stood and stared at them for long, but I heard Alan shout as if for help, and that brought me to my senses.

He had kept the door so long; but one of the seamen,

while he was engaged with others, had run in under his guard and caught him about the body. Alan was dirking him with his left hand, but the fellow clung like a leech. Another had broken in and had his cutlass raised. The door was thronged with their faces. I thought we were lost, and, catching up my cutlass, fell on them in flank.

But I had not time to be of help. The wrestler dropped at last; and Alan, leaping back to get his distance, ran upon the others like a bull, roaring as he went. They broke before him like water, turning, and running, and falling one against another in their haste. The sword in his hands flashed like quicksilver into the huddle of our fleeing enemies; and at every flash there came the scream of a man hurt. I was still thinking we were lost, when lo! they were all gone, and Alan was driving them along the deck as a sheep-dog chases sheep.

Yet he was no sooner out than he was back again, being as cautious as he was brave; and meanwhile the seamen continued running and crying out as if he was still behind them; and we heard them tumble one upon another into the forecastle, and clap-to the hatch upon the top.

The round-house was like a shambles; three were dead inside, another lay in his death agony across the threshold; and there were Alan and I victorious and unhurt.

He came up to me with open arms. "Come to my arms!" he cried, and embraced and kissed me hard upon both cheeks. "David," said he, "I love you like a brother. And oh, man," he cried in a kind of ecstasy, "am I not a bonny fighter?"

Thereupon he turned to the four enemies, passed his sword clean through each of them, and tumbled them out-of-doors. As he did so he kept humming and singing and whistling to himself, like a man trying to recall an air; only what he was trying was to make one. All the

while the flush was in his face, and his eyes were as bright as a five-year-old child's with a new toy. And presently he sat down upon the table, sword in hand; the air that he was making all the time began to run a little clearer, and then clearer still; and then out he burst with a great voice into a Gaelic song.

I have translated it here, not in verse (of which I have no skill), but at least in the king's English. He sang it often afterward, and the thing became popular; so that I have heard it, and had it explained to me, many's the time:

This is the song of the sword of Alan:  
The smith made it,  
The fire set it;  
Now it shines in the hand of Alan Breck.

Their eyes were many and bright,  
Swift were they to behold,  
Many the hands they guided:  
The sword was alone.

The dun deer troop over the hill,  
They are many, the hill is one;  
The dun deer vanish,  
The hill remains.

Come to me from the hills of heather,  
Come from the isles of the sea.  
O far-beholding eagles,  
Here is your meat.

Now this song which he made (both words and music) in the hour of our victory is something less than just to me, who stood beside him in the tussle. Mr. Shuan and five more were either killed outright or thoroughly disabled; but of these, two fell by my hand, the two that came by the skylight. Four more were hurt, and of that

number, one (and he not the least important) got his hurt from me. So that, altogether, I did my fair share both of the killing and the wounding, and might have claimed a place in Alan's verses. But poets (as a very wise man once told me) have to think upon their rhymes; and in good prose talk Alan always did me more than justice.

In the mean while I was innocent of any wrong being done me. For not only I knew no word of the Gaelic; but what with the long suspense of the waiting, and the scurry and strain of our two spirits of fighting, and, more than all, the horror I had of some of my own share in it, the thing was no sooner over than I was glad to stagger to a seat. There was that tightness on my chest that I could hardly breathe; the thought of the two men I had shot sat upon me like a nightmare; and all upon a sudden, and before I had a guess of what was coming, I began to sob and cry like any child.

Alan clapped my shoulder, and said I was a brave lad and wanted nothing but a sleep.

"I'll take the first watch," said he. "Ye've done well by me, David, first and last; and I wouldn't lose you for all Appin—no, nor for Breadalbane."

So he made up my bed on the floor, and took the first spell, pistol in hand and sword on knee: three hours by the captain's watch upon the wall. Then he roused me up, and I took my turn of three hours; before the end of which it was broad day, and a very quiet morning, with a smooth, rolling sea that tossed the ship and made the blood run to and fro on the round-house floor, and a heavy rain that drummed upon the roof. All my watch there was nothing stirring; and by the banging of the helm, I knew they had even no one at the tiller. Indeed (as I learned afterward) they were so many of them hurt or dead, and the rest in so ill a temper, that Mr. Riach and the

captain had to take turn and turn (like Alan and me), or the brig might have gone ashore and nobody the wiser. It was a mercy the night had fallen so still, for the wind had gone down as soon as the rain began. Even as it was, I judged by the wailing of a great number of gulls that went crying and fishing round the ship that she must have drifted pretty near the coast or one of the islands of the Hebrides; and at last, looking out of the door of the round-house, I saw the great stone hills of Skye on the right hand, and, a little more astern, the strange Isle of Rum.

### ANNIXTER'S DUEL WITH THE COW-PUNCHER<sup>1</sup>

*Frank Norris (1870-1902)*

[Delaney has been unjustly discharged by Annixter for being in love with Hilma, another of his employees, with whom he himself is in love. At a dance which Annixter is giving, to celebrate the completion of the building of a new barn, Delaney suddenly appears.]

He came with the suddenness of an explosion. There was a commotion by the doorway, a rolling burst of oaths, a furious stamping of hoofs, a wild scramble of the dancers to either side of the room, and there he was. He had ridden the buckskin at a gallop straight through the doorway and onto the middle of the floor of the barn.

Once well inside, Delaney hauled up on the cruel spade-bit, at the same time driving home the spurs, and the buckskin, without halting in her gait, rose into the air upon her hind feet, and coming down again with a thunder of iron hoofs upon the hollow floor, lashed out with both heels simultaneously, her back arched, her head between her

<sup>1</sup> From *The Octopus*. Copyright, 1901, by Doubleday, Page & Co.

knees. It was the running buck, and had not Delaney been the hardest buster in the county, would have flung him headlong like a sack of sand. But he eased off the bit, gripping the mare's flanks with his knees, and the buckskin, having long since known her master, came to hand quivering, the bloody spume dripping from the bit upon the slippery floor.

Delaney had arrayed himself with painful elaboration, determined to look the part, bent upon creating the impression, resolved that his appearance at least should justify his reputation of being "bad." Nothing was lacking—neither the campaign hat with upturned brim, nor the dotted blue handkerchief knotted behind the neck, nor the heavy gauntlets stitched with red, nor—this above all—the bearskin *chaparejos*, the hair trousers of the mountain cowboy, the pistol holster low on the thigh. But for the moment this holster was empty, and in his right hand, the hammer at full cock, the chamber loaded, the puncher flourished his teaser, an army Colt's, the lamp-light dully reflected in the dark-blue steel.

In a second of time the dance was a bedlam. The musicians stopped with a discord, and the middle of the crowded floor bared itself instantly. It was like sand blown from off a rock; the throng of guests, carried by an impulse that was not to be resisted, bore back against the sides of the barn, overturning chairs, tripping upon each other, falling down, scrambling to their feet again, stepping over one another, getting behind each other, diving under chairs, flattening themselves against the wall—wild, clamoring pell-mell, blind, deaf, panic-stricken; a confused tangle of waving arms, torn muslin, crushed flowers, pale faces, tangled legs, that swept in all directions back from the centre of the floor, leaving Annixter and Hilma, alone, deserted, their arms about each other,

face to face with Delaney, mad with alcohol, bursting with remembered insult, bent on evil, reckless of results.

After the first scramble for safety the crowd fell quiet for the fraction of an instant, glued to the walls, afraid to stir, struck dumb and motionless with surprise and terror, and in the instant's silence that followed Annixter, his eyes on Delaney, muttered rapidly to Hilma:

"Get back, get away to one side! The fool *might* shoot!"

There was a second's respite afforded while Delaney occupied himself in quieting the buckskin, and in that second of time, at this moment of crisis, the wonderful thing occurred: Hilma, turning from Delaney, her hands clasped on Annixter's arm, her eyes meeting his, exclaimed:

"You, too!"

And that was all; but to Annixter it was a revelation. Never more alive to his surroundings, never more observant, he suddenly understood. For the briefest lapse of time he and Hilma looked deep into each other's eyes, and from that moment on Annixter knew that Hilma cared.

The whole matter was brief as the snapping of a finger. Two words and a glance and all was done. But as though nothing had occurred, Annixter pushed Hilma from him, repeating harshly:

"Get back, I tell you! Don't you see he's got a gun? Haven't I enough on my hands without you?"

He loosed her clasp and, his eyes once more on Delaney, moved diagonally backward toward the side of the barn, pushing Hilma from him. In the end he thrust her away so sharply that she gave back with a long stagger; somebody caught her arm and drew her in, leaving Annixter alone once more in the middle of the floor, his hands in his coat pockets, watchful, alert, facing his enemy.

But the cow-puncher was not ready to come to grapples yet. Fearless, his wits gambolling under the lash of the



alcohol, he wished to make the most of the occasion, maintaining the suspense, playing for the gallery. By touches of the hand and knee he kept the buckskin in continual, nervous movement, her hoofs clattering, snorting, tossing her head, while he, himself, addressing himself to Annixter, poured out a torrent of invective.

"Well, strike me blind if it ain't old Buck Annixter! He was going to show me off Quien Sabe at the toe of his boot, was he? Well, here's your chance—with the ladies to see you do it. Gives a dance, does he, high-falutin' hoe-down in his barn and forgets to invite his old broncho-bustin' friend? But his friend don't forget him; no, he don't. He remembers little things, does his broncho-bustin' friend. Likes to see a dance hisself on occasion, his friend does. Comes anyhow, trustin' his welcome will be hearty; just to see old Buck Annixter dance, just to show Buck Annixter's friends how Buck can dance—dance all by hisself, a little hen-on-a-hot-plate dance when his broncho-bustin' friend asks him so polite. A little dance for the ladies, Buck. This feature of the entertainment is alone worth the price of admission. Tune up, Buck. Attention now! I'll give you the key."

He "fanned" his revolver, spinning it about his index finger by the trigger-guard with incredible swiftness, the twirling weapon a mere blur of blue steel in his hand. Suddenly, and without any apparent cessation of the movement, he fired, and a little splinter of wood flipped into the air at Annixter's feet.

"Time!" he shouted, while the buckskin reared to the report. "Hold on—wait a minute! This place is too light to suit. That big light yonder is in my eyes. Look out, I'm going to throw lead!"

A second shot put out the lamp over the musicians' stand. The assembled guests shrieked, a frantic, shrinking

quiver ran through the crowd like the huddling of frightened rabbits in their pen.

Annixter hardly moved. He stood some thirty paces from the buster, his hands still in his coat pockets, his eyes glistening, watchful.

Excitable and turbulent in trifling matters, when actual bodily danger threatened he was of an abnormal quiet.

"I'm watching you!" cried the other. "Don't make any mistake about that. Keep your hands in your *coat* pockets, if you'd like to live a little longer; understand? And don't let me see you make a move toward your hip or your friends will be asked to identify you at the morgue to-morrow morning. When I'm bad, I'm called the Undertaker's Friend, so I am, and I'm that bad to-night that I'm scared of myself. They'll have to revise the census returns before I'm done with this place. Come on, now, I'm getting tired waiting. I come to see a dance."

"Hand over that horse, Delaney," said Annixter, without raising his voice, "and clear out."

The other affected to be overwhelmed with infinite astonishment, his eyes staring. He peered down from the saddle.

"Wh-a-a-t!" he exclaimed; "wh-a-a-t did you say? Why, I guess you must be looking for trouble; that's what I guess."

"There's where you're wrong, m'son," muttered Annixter, partly to Delaney, partly to himself. "If I was looking for trouble, there wouldn't be any guesswork about it."

With the words he began firing. Delaney had hardly entered the barn before Annixter's plan had been formed. Long since his revolver was in the pocket of his coat, and he fired now through the coat itself, without withdrawing his hands.

Until that moment Annixter had not been sure of him-

self. There was no doubt that for the first few moments of the affair he would have welcomed with joy any reasonable excuse for getting out of the situation. But the sound of his own revolver gave him confidence. He whipped it from his pocket and fired again.

Abruptly the duel began, report following report, spurts of pale blue smoke jetting like the darts of short spears between the two men, expanding to a haze and drifting overhead in wavering strata. It was quite probable that no thought of killing each other suggested itself to either Annixter or Delaney. Both fired without aiming very deliberately. To empty their revolvers and avoid being hit was the desire common to both. They no longer vituperated each other. The revolvers spoke for them.

Long after, Annixter could recall this moment. For years he could with but little effort reconstruct the scene—the densely packed crowd flattened against the sides of the barn, the festoons of lanterns, the mingled smell of evergreens, new wood, sachets, and powder smoke; the vague clamor of distress and terror that rose from the throng of guests, the squealing of the buckskin, the uneven explosions of the revolvers, the reverberation of trampling hoofs, a brief glimpse of Harran Derrick's excited face at the door of the harness-room, and in the open space in the centre of the floor, himself and Delaney, manœuvring swiftly in a cloud of smoke.

Annixter's revolver contained but six cartridges. Already it seemed to him as if he had fired twenty times. Without doubt the next shot was his last. Then what? He peered through the blue haze that with every discharge thickened between him and the buster. For his own safety he must "place" at least one shot. Delaney's chest and shoulders rose suddenly above the smoke close upon him as the distraught buckskin reared again. An-

nixter, for the first time during the fight, took definite aim, but before he could draw the trigger there was a great shout and he was aware of the buckskin, the bridle trailing, the saddle empty, plunging headlong across the floor, crashing into the line of chairs. Delaney was scrambling off the floor. There was blood on the buster's wrist and he no longer carried his revolver. Suddenly he turned and ran. The crowd parted right and left before him as he made toward the doorway. He disappeared.

Twenty men promptly sprang to the buckskin's head, but she broke away, and, wild with terror, bewildered, blind, insensate, charged into the corner of the barn by the musicians' stand. She brought up against the wall with cruel force and with the impact of a sack of stones; her head was cut. She turned and charged again, bull-like, the blood streaming from her forehead. The crowd, shrieking, melted before her rush. An old man was thrown down and trampled. The buckskin trod upon the dragging bridle, somersaulted into a confusion of chairs in one corner, and came down with a terrific clatter in a wild disorder of kicking hoofs and splintered wood. But a crowd of men fell upon her, tugging at the bit, sitting on her head, shouting, gesticulating. For five minutes she struggled and fought; then, by degrees, she recovered herself, drawing great sobbing breaths at long intervals that all but burst the girths, rolling her eyes in bewildered, supplicating fashion, trembling in every muscle, and starting and shrinking now and then like a young girl in hysterics. At last she lay quiet. The men allowed her to struggle to her feet. The saddle was removed and she was led to one of the empty stalls, where she remained the rest of the evening, her head low, her pasterns quivering, turning her head apprehensively from time to time, showing the white of one eye, and at long intervals heaving a single prolonged sigh.

And an hour later the dance was progressing as evenly as though nothing in the least extraordinary had occurred. The incident was closed—that abrupt swoop of terror and impending death dropping down there from out the darkness, cutting abruptly athwart the gayety of the moment, come and gone with the swiftiness of a thunderclap.

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